VICTORIA
THE WOMAN

FRANK HIRD

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VICTORIA
THE WOMAN

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Queen Victoria.

1837.

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VICTORIA
THE WOMAN

By FRANK HIRD

ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAVURE FRONTISPIECE AND FIFTEEN FULL-PAGE PLATES

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PREFACE

THIS book in no way purports to be a complete life of Queen Victoria. I cannot even claim that it is a complete study of her character. It has been my aim to give some impression of the influences that affected the Queen's early environment, some suggestion of the circumstances that affected her later years.

I have endeavoured to show the Queen as a daughter, a wife, a woman, a mother, a friend, and a Sovereign; and, wherever it has been possible, I have made use of the Queen's own words, since it was in Her Majesty's letters and diaries that her character in all its charm of simplicity and naturalness, its instinctive understanding, its ever-ready sympathy and true womanliness, fully reveals itself. No use has been made of the "Letters of Queen Victoria" in the writing of this volume.

My thanks are due to Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower for his permission to reproduce the Queen's sketch for her bridesmaids' dresses, and one of Her Majesty's letters; also to Mrs. Gerald Gurney for her permission to quote the interesting letter of Justice Hardynge from her book "The Childhood of Queen Victoria."

FRANK HIRD.

Plage d'Hardelot
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VICTORIA THE WOMAN

CHAPTER I

QUEEN VICTORIA'S PARENTAGE

OUR queens have ruled England as sovereigns in their own right, Queen Mary Tudor and Queen Elizabeth, the daughters of Henry VIII, Queen Anne, the daughter of James II, and heiress to her sister Queen Mary of Orange,[1] and lastly Queen Victoria, the granddaughter of George III and the niece of William IV whom she succeeded. By a strange chance of fortune, a curious repetition of history, three of these queens went in actual danger of their lives before their accession to the throne. At a period vibrating with religious strife, when the followers of the Reformation were arrayed

[1] Mary of Orange, the elder daughter of James II, was offered the crown when her father fled at the Revolution of 1688, but she declined to accept it unless her husband, William, Prince of Orange, shared the throne with her; and thus practically forced the English people to make him joint sovereign with herself.

against the followers of the Church of Rome, and when each party, as it gained the upper hand, ruthlessly condemned its opponents in belief to the torture chamber and the stake, plots against the persons of Mary and Elizabeth Tudor were but the outcome of the age, the spirit of the age being what it was. Mary was the hope of the Roman Catholics, Elizabeth the hope of the Protestants. Little wonder then that as Edward VI's feeble life flickered to its close, and it became clear that Mary must inevitably be Queen of England, the Protestants viewed her coming accession with alarm. She was pledged by the most solemn oaths to sweep away the Protestantism established by her father and her brother. There were Protestants who deemed it a religious duty that she should be removed in order that Elizabeth should occupy the throne, and but for the care with which Mary was guarded she would have fallen a victim to one of the many attempts made to assassinate her. When Mary was queen, and it became clear that her union with Philip II. of Spain would be childless, the Roman Catholics were in the same position as the Protestants in the former reign. The situation was in all respects identical with that which existed during the lifetime of Edward VI. Then the succes-

sion of Elizabeth meant the continuance of the Protestant religion; Mary's succession by Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, meant the continuance of the Roman Catholic religion. And, as the Protestants had set themselves to remove Mary, so the Roman Catholics set themselves to remove her sister Elizabeth.

Mary and Elizabeth were grown women when their heirship to the throne set daily menace about their lives; they were both strong-minded, calculating, and far-seeing, and well able to take care of themselves even in such a network of intrigues and dangers as the Tudor court. Elizabeth herself at one moment was in sight of the block and the executioner's ax. She owed her escape in no small measure to her own courage.

But the third queen was only a little child when she was threatened with the same danger that had surrounded her two Tudor forebears on the throne. And although in her case the menace was purely the outcome of personal ambition, and was vague and shadowy, never taking actual shape, nevertheless the menace existed. It was known to exist by those who had charge of the little Princess Victoria, afterwards to be the greatest of all the English queens, and, as will be seen, was guarded

against hourly and daily for eighteen years by her mother, the Duchess of Kent. The life of the Princess Victoria alone stood between her uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, and a great kingdom. The Duke of Cumberland was unprincipled and utterly unscrupulous; he was the most detested man in England, and has been likened by a serious and impartial historian of our own time to Tiberius.

A glance at the history of the members of George III's numerous family will show the position in which the duke stood towards the Princess Victoria, and how the fact of her existence alone deprived him of the crown of England.

George III and Queen Charlotte had fifteen children, and of these seven sons and five daughters grew to manhood and womanhood, but when the Princess Charlotte died in 1817, the country and the royal family were seized with consternation, for she was the only descendant of the aged monarch in the third generation. The Princess Charlotte was the only child of the eldest son—the Prince of Wales, who for many years acted as Prince Regent during the periods of George III's madness—and had been married to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg in 1816, a marriage, which, as we shall see, had an important bearing upon the life of Queen Victoria.

The relations between the Prince Regent and his unfortunate wife and cousin, Caroline of Brunswick, were the scandal of Europe: it was impossible that they should ever live together again. After the Prince Regent the Duke of York was next heir; he had married in 1791 the Princess Royal of Prussia, but the union was childless, and therefore the third son, the Duke of Clarence, the fourth son, the Duke of Kent, and the fifth son, the Duke of Cumberland, stood next in the order of succession. The two former were unmarried, and the country saw with alarm the possibility of the sovereignty passing from brother to brother in the order of their birth, and ultimately devolving upon the hated Duke of Cumberland, who had married the Princess Frederica of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, the sister of the patriotic Queen Louise of Prussia. This princess had been divorced from her first husband, the Prince of Solms Braunfels, and possessed such an unhappy reputation that Queen Charlotte declined to receive her. The wife would have been as little acceptable to the English people as queen, as the husband would have been as king.

The Duke of Wellington and Lord Palmerston openly expressed the fears of the nation, and Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister, agreed

in their opinion that the speedy marriage of the two bachelor princes was a "public duty." The Prince Regent considered that only the Duke of Clarence need marry, but the princes and the politicians thought otherwise, and during the summer of 1818, not only did the Duke of Clarence, who was fifty-three, and the Duke of Kent, who was fifty-one, take wives unto themselves, but the Duke of Cambridge, who stood next in the succession to the Duke of Sussex—who had made an illegal marriage and whose children were therefore not eligible for the throne—followed their example.

Each brother married a German princess, the choice of the Duke of Kent falling upon the widowed Princess of Leiningen, who was a sister of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, the widower of Princess Charlotte. Prince Leopold, it is said, had suggested this marriage during the brief time he had occupied the position of consort to a future queen of England, but the duke's financial position had stood in the way. The death of the Princess Charlotte entirely altered the Duke of Kent's position. His three elder brothers were middle-aged men. Two were married and childless, and therefore from the point of view of so astute a diplomatist as Prince Leopold, he was, humanly speaking, not

only a possible but a probable occupant of the throne. He now urged the marriage yet more strongly upon his sister. She had made the duke's acquaintance two years before in Brussels, and whatever her brother's influence may have been, accepted his second proposal more because of affection than because of interest. They were married at Coburg according to the Lutheran rite, and again in England two months later, in the presence of the duke's mother, Queen Charlotte, and the Prince Regent, by the rite of the Church of England. The Duke of Clarence was married at the same time to Princess Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen, a temporary altar having been erected in Queen Charlotte's drawing-room at Kew Palace for the double ceremony, the Prince Regent giving both brides away.

On the death of her first husband, the Prince of Leiningen, to whom she had been married when scarcely seventeen, the Duchess of Kent had been made regent of his small principality during the minority of their son. During the eleven years of their marriage the tiny State had been so constantly overrun by the armies of Napoleon, until, as the duchess herself said, there was not enough grass left to feed a flock of geese, while cows had practically disappeared.

From the earliest years of her first marriage she had known the stress of invading armies and the extreme pinch of poverty. She had witnessed the utter devastation of her husband's inheritance and had seen her father driven from his Duchy of Coburg, and her mother, her brother, and sister undergoing all the horrors of a siege at Saalfeld. To such straits were her parents reduced that her mother was obliged to borrow a black silk dress when she wished to intercede with Napoleon to remit some part of the crushing war indemnity levied upon her husband's duchy. Napoleon allowed her to travel to the extreme north of Germany—royal princess and reigning sovereign though she was, the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg was compelled to walk the greater part of the way—and then sent word he could not see her.

Some of the members of the Duchess of Kent's family would have starved but for the charity of their servants.

But although disaster followed disaster, and there were actually days when she, the daughter of a royal house, and the regent of a principality, did not know where to obtain food for herself and her children, so completely had the French, the Austrians, and the Prussians ravaged the country, she never lost her courage, her cheer-

fulness of spirits, or the indomitable determination to protect her son's rights at all hazards. Her second marriage laid a heavier burden of responsibility upon her since it called upon her to exercise these qualities of courage, cheerfulness, and protection in a wider plane than a small principality, and for the benefit of a child who was to be a queen.

The fall of Napoleon relieved her of a perpetual menace, but it did not fill the depleted treasury of Leiningen. Her marriage to the Duke of Kent only added to her monetary anxieties, despite the fact that the English Parliament had granted him an extra allowance of £6,000 a year in addition to the £12,000 he already enjoyed.

The newly wedded pair were not in an enviable position, and but for the duchess's unwearying cheerfulness, and the duke's solid good qualities, as well as their mutual regard, their life would have been one of misery.

In common with his elder brothers the Duke of Kent was always in debt, but the cause was not the same. The Prince Regent and the Duke of York squandered their incomes and all they could borrow in riotous living. The Duke of Kent owed his financial embarrassments to his training. For some reason, which has never

come to light, both George III and Queen Charlotte disliked their fourth son from his infancy. A distinction was always made between him and his brothers, and at an early age he was sent to Hanover where he was placed in the charge of a tutor, Baron Wagenheim, who carried out King George's instructions as to strictness of *régime* with the greatest severity. At an age when impressions take their firmest hold Prince Edward, as he was then styled, was deprived of the companionship of his brothers and sisters, all society of his own age, and left entirely to the charge of a martinet, who believed that a young prince was best prevented from falling into mischief by being kept short of pocket-money. So little money was given to Prince Edward at Hanover that he could not buy bare necessaries; and not being able to buy he went into debt and thus formed an incurable habit of forestalling his income, a habit which clouded his life and ultimately obliged him to live out of England in order to escape his creditors. Of all the sons of King George III the Duke of Kent was the most estimable, the most serious minded, yet he was created a duke and given an allowance at a much later age than any of his brothers. When the allowance of £12,000 a year was granted he was already heavily in debt. The

tangle of his affairs was never smoothed out, and when his daughter became queen, seventeen years after his death, she paid his creditors before she would sanction any personal expenditure for herself.

Sir John Conroy, who was the Duke of Kent's aide-de-camp for many years and after his death the devoted servant of the duchess, used to say that the duke's financial troubles were chiefly due to his "mania for perfection." His mind was engrossed by details. When he was commander in chief in Canada, and later when he was Governor of Gibraltar, his insistence on the correctness of all minutiæ of uniform made him most unpopular. The Duke of Kent was a martinet in small matters, and a slave to precision and orderliness. The soldiers under his command were ordered to have their hair cut in a fashion he had himself set forth in an order of the day; a strap awry, a loose button, a buckle not sufficiently polished, a belt not sufficiently pipe-clayed, nothing was too slight to escape his notice at the incessant parades and drills to which he subjected his men. At Gibraltar he arbitrarily closed all the wine shops and confined the troops to barracks with the hope of eradicating the prevailing vice of drunkenness. The intention was admirable but the action

showed ignorance of human nature, especially of soldier nature, and a plot to assassinate him having been discovered he was recalled. His petty restrictions and absorbing passion for unnecessary details had driven the garrison to the verge of mutiny; he was never given another command.

The duke carried his passion for perfection in detail, for precision, and punctuality into his private life, sternly exacting the same habits from those about him. At the same time he was the kindliest of men. He would sit up all night with a sick servant. All cases of illness among the troops under his command were immediately reported to him, and if strengthening food was needed he would have it prepared in his own kitchen. He made it his personal business to see that his soldiers were well housed and well fed. In all respects, save with regard to money, he was practical and businesslike; a strong vein of piety ran through his character; no scandal ever smirched his name, and his high principles of life and conduct stood out in marked contrast with those which disgraced the careers of some of his brothers. So, while Queen Victoria owed her sweet womanliness to her mother, she inherited the punctuality and methodical arrangement of her day, which distinguished her to the

end, from her father, and from him, too, came her strong sense of religion and her dislike of frivolous amusements whose only object was the killing of time.

A letter written by Justice Hardynge in 1811 after a visit he had paid to the Duke of Kent at his house, Castle Hill, near London, bears out Sir John Conroy's opinion as to the root cause of the duke's money difficulties, his "mania for perfection."

"MELBOURNE HOUSE,
"October 15, 1811.

"MY DEAREST RICHARD:

"That I may lose no drop from the cup of pleasure, which I enjoyed from seven in the morning of October 1st to eleven and from eight the next morning till eleven before noon, at Castle Hill, I shall record upon paper, as memory can present them, all the images of my enchantment, though the consummation is past.

"In the afternoon of October 1st, and at half-past five, I followed my servant, in undress, from Ealing Vicarage to the lodge of the Duke's palace. Between these wings I was received in due form by a porter, in livery, full trimmed and powdered. He opened the iron gates for me, bowed as if I had been the King, and rang the alarm bell as if I had been a hostile invader.

I looked as tall, as intrepid, and as affable as I could; but I am afraid that I was not born for state.

"The approach to the palace door is magnificent, graceful, and picturesque. The line of the road, flanked by a row of lamps the most magnificent I ever saw, is a gentle serpentine. It commands to the right, through young but thriving plantations, Harrow-on-the-Hill, and carries the eye in a sort of leap to that eminence over the intermediate ground, which is a valley better unseen for it is very tame. The lodges are quite new and in Dr. Wyatt's best manner. A second gate flew open to me; it separates the home garden from the lawn of entrance. The head gardener made his appearance in his best clothes, bowed, rang *his* bell to the house and withdrew.

"When I arrived at the palace door my heart went pit-a-pat. The underwriters would not have insured my life at seven minutes' purchase, unless tempted by a most inordinate premium. An aspen leaf in a high wind stood better upon its legs than I stood upon mine; indeed, I am not sure if it was not upon my head instead of my legs. I invoked all the saints of impudence to befriend me! But think of little me!—attended by six footmen!—three of a side!—and received

at the head of this guard by the house steward!—a venerable henchman of the old court, and of the last age, who had very much the appearance of a cabinet minister. He conducted me with more solemnity than I wished upstairs into my toilet room. At the door of it stood the Duke's valet, who took charge of me into the room, bowed and retired. In this apartment I found my own servant.

"The exterior of the house has an elegant and a chaste, as well as princely air. You can see 'Wyatt fecit' on every point of the effect. But the interior struck me infinitely more, even in the bird's-eye view of it. I was all astonishment, but it was accompanied with dismay at the awful silence which reigned, as well as the unexampled brilliancy of the colors. There was not one speck to be seen; everything was exquisite of its kind, in the taste of its outline, proportions, and furniture.

"My dressing room, in which there was an excellent fire, attached itself to the bedroom, and was laid open to it by a folding door. These are the Regent's territories whenever he is at Castle Hill. My toilet was *à peindre,* and there was not anything omitted which could make a youthful Adonis out of an old hermit; but the mirror was honest, and youth is no birth of art. My

servant (who is in general cavalier, keeps me in order, and gives me only two or three jerks with his comb), half scared at the new and imperial honors of his little master, waited on me with more deference and assiduity than I had ever before marked in him. He called me once or twice 'My lord,' as upon circuit, and I half expected that he would say 'your Royal Highness.' A gentle tap at the door alarmed us both. We opened upon a messenger, who told me in French that his Royal Highness was dressing, but would soon do himself the honour of taking me by the hand.

"Opening by accident one of the doors in the bedchamber, painted with *traillage* in green and gold, I discovered in an adjoining closet a running stream and a fountain. I began to think I was in the Fields Elysian. The bed was only to be ascended by a ladder of steps, and they dressed in flowered velvet. There was a cold bath, and at night hot water for my feet, if they should happen to wish for it. Pen, ink, and paper of all descriptions made love to me. Books of amusement were dispersed upon the tables like natural flowers. I was in my shirt when his Royal Highness knocked at the door. Not waiting for my answer, he opened the door himself and gave me a shake of the hand with

his royal fist, so cordial that one of my chalkstone fingers, had I possessed them, would have begged him, if he had not been the son of a king, to be rather less affectionate in that shape. I hurried on my coat and waistcoat in his presence; and then he walked before me into the library. All the passages and staircases were illuminated with lamps of different colours, just as if a masquerade was in train. I began to think more and more of 'Sly' in Shakespeare, and said like him, to myself, *'Am I indeed a lord?'* This library, fitted up in the perfection of taste, is the first room of a magnificent range, commanding at least a hundred feet. All the contiguous apartments in that suite were lighted up and laid open to this apartment. By a contrivance in the management of the light, it seemed as if the distance had no end.

"The Duke, among other peculiarities of habit, bordering upon whim, always recommends *the very chair on which you are to sit.* I suppose it is a regal usage. He opened a most agreeable and friendly chat, which continued for half an hour *tête-à-tête.* So far it was like the manner of the King (when he was himself) that it embraced a variety of topics and was unremitted. He improved at close quarters even upon his pen; and you know *what a pen* it is.

The manly character of his good sense, and the eloquence of his expression, are striking. But even they were not so enchanting as that grace of manner which distinguishes him. Compared with it, in my honest opinion, Lord Chesterfield, whom I am old enough to have heard and seen, was a dancing master. I found the next morning at our *tête-à-tête* that he has infinite humour, and even that of making his countenance subserve the character he has to personate.

"In about an hour dinner was announced. The Duke led the way. I was placed at the head of the table; the Duke was on my right. The dinner was exquisite. The soup was of a kind that an epicure would have travelled three miles in deep snow to have been in time for it.

"The famous Dumourier was accidentally mentioned. I said that I loved seeing those whom I admired unseen, upon report alone and in the mind's view. 'But I shall never see Dumourier,' I said, 'for he is the Lord knows where (and I cannot run after him) upon the Continent.' 'Not he,' said the Duke, 'he is in this very island, and he often dines with us here.' I looked, but said nothing; my look was heard. A third party present asked the Duke if it could not be managed. 'Nothing more practicable,' said he; 'if the Judge will but throw down his

glove in the fair spirit of chivalry, Dumourier shall pick it up.'

"The servants, though I could not reconcile myself to the number of them, were models of attention, of propriety, and respect; their apparel gave the impression of clothes perfectly new; the hair was uncommonly well dressed and powdered. *Thereby hangs a tale,* which I cannot have a better opportunity of reporting. I had it from the best authority, that of my own servant, who had it from the *souterraine* of the establishment, which he had confidentially explored. *A hairdresser for all the livery servants* constitutes one of the efficient characters in this dramatic arrangement. At a certain hour every male servant appears before the Duke to show himself, *perfectly well dressed and clean.* Besides this 'law of the Medes' every man has a niche to fill, so that he can never be unoccupied save at his meals, in some duty or another, and is answerable to a sudden visit into the bargain. I can assure you the result is that in this complicated machine of souls and bodies the genius of attention, of cleanliness, and of smart appearance is the order of the day.

"When the Duke took me the next morning to his master of the horse, instead of dirty coachmen or grooms, they were all as neat as

if they never had anything to do, or as if they were going to church in state. The male servants meet in their hall at an unvaried hour, and round this apartment, as in a convent, are little recesses or cells, with not only beds in them for each, but every accommodation as well as implement for their apparel. Yet all this absolute monarchy of system is consistent with a most obliging manner to the servants on his part, which I attested more than once; and with *attachment* as well as homage to *him,* attested by the hermit's inquisitor or spy, who gave me this note of his comments. I mean, of course, my own servant.

"The next morning I rose at seven. The lawn before me, surrounded by an amphitheatre of plantation, was covered by leaves, for they will fall even in a garden of state. The head gardener made his appearance, and with him five or six men who were under his wing. In much less than a quarter of an hour every dead leaf had disappeared, and the turf became a carpet after mowing, and after a succession of rollers, iron, and stone.

"After this episode we are to go back and be at the table again. A very little after dinner the summons came for coffee, and as before, *he* led the way, conducting me to another of the

apartments in the range before described, and which, as it happened, was close to the bedroom. They were open to each other; but such a room as that bedroom no Loves or Graces ever thought of showing to a *hermit*. It was perfectly regal.

"In the morning the Duke showed me all his variety of horses and carriages. He pointed out a curricle to me. 'I bought that curricle,' said he, 'twenty years ago, have travelled in it all over the world and there it is, firm on its axle. I never was spilt from it but once. It was in Canada, near the Falls of Niagara, over a concealed stump in a wood just cleared.'

"He afterwards opened himself to me very much in detail, with disclosures in confidence, and political ones, too, which interested as well as enlightened me greatly, but which, as a man of honour, I cannot reveal even to you. He is no gamester; he is no huntsman. He never goes to Newmarket, but he loves riding upon the road, a full swing trot of *nine* miles an *hour*.

"I am going to part with him in my narrative, but not before I have commanded you to love him.

"In the morning he asked how I was *mounted*, and before I could answer him he whispered (in a kind of parenthesis) that he

'had for two months been putting a little circuit horse in training for my use of him in spring.' 'It was a pet,' he said, 'of the dear King, who gave it me; and you will ride it with more pleasure for both our sakes.' These were not 'goodly words' like those of Naphtali, or 'the hind let loose,' for my servant raised the intelligence *that such a keepsake was intended for me.* How charming is the delicacy of conduct like this! I had once complained, three or four months ago, that my own circuit Bucephalus had kissed the earth with his knees. He condoled with me, half in jest; but gave me no hint of such a fairy's boon in store for me.

"But now for the last of these wonders. I can give you not the faintest image of its effect upon me. It made me absolutely wild. The room in which our breakfast apparatus received us had at the end of it a very ornamental glass door, with a mist over it, so that nothing was to be seen through it. He poured me out a dish of tea and placed it before me, then rose from the table and opened that glass door. Somebody (but whom I could not see) was on the other side, for he addressed words to the unseen, words in German. When he returned, and I had just lifted the cup to my lips imagine my feelings when a band of thirty wind instruments played

a march with a delicacy of tone, as well as precision, for which I have no words equal to the charm of its effect. They were all behind this glass door and were like one instrument. The uplifted cup was replaced on the table, I was all ears and entranced, when on a sudden they performed the dirge upon *our* naval hero.[1] It threw me into a burst of tears. With a heart for which I must ever love him, he took me by the hand and said, 'Those are tears which do none of us any harm.' He then made them play all imaginary varieties for a complete hour. He walked me round his place, and parted with me in these words, '*You see that we are not formidable*; do come to us again! Come soon, and come very often!'

"*May* I not—*must* I not love this man.

"GEO. HARDYNGE."

Such state and magnificence could not possibly be supported on an income of £12,000 a year already heavily burdened, and ultimately the duke's debts caused Castle Hill to be closed and forced its royal owner to take refuge in Brussels in order to escape his creditors: in Brussels he met his future wife.

Two reasons prevented the Duke and Duchess

[1] Lord Nelson.

of Kent from living in England immediately after their marriage. The first was lack of means for the duke's income, although now £18,000 a year with its augmentation by £6,000, was mortgaged to his creditors and administered on their behalf by trustees. The second reason was the desire, so emphatically expressed that it amounted to a stipulation, of the Prince Regent that his brother Edward should reside abroad.

The duke at this period of his life, as at others, was badly treated by his family. His elder brothers were well provided for; the Dukes of York and Clarence and Cumberland enjoyed many sinecures, while his younger brother, the Duke of Cambridge, acting as viceroy for their father in Hanover, drew a large income besides his allowance from England. It was an age of flagrant jobbery, and sinecures for princes were regarded as part of their birthright, but while richly paid posts were showered on his brothers nothing was done for the Duke of Kent. His brothers despised him, especially the Prince Regent who was all-powerful, and who was entirely under the influence of the Duke of Cumberland.

The newly married pair therefore had no alternative but to retire to Germany, where they

settled at Amorbach, near Heidelberg, in the little principality of which the duchess was still regent for the son of her first marriage. This arrangement certainly pleased the duchess, for, like all Germans, she was deeply attached to her native country; she was adored by the people over whom she ruled, and she was too devoted to her Leiningen children to bear separation from them easily. But after a few short months of happiness she was obliged to relinquish the training of her son and the care of his state to other hands, and to set out upon a visit to England, a visit which circumstances changed to a residence of twenty-two years.

When the duchess was about to become a mother in 1819, the duke's first thought was that the child should be born in England. Throughout the whole of his life, it is said, he was convinced that either he or his heir would wear the crown, but the duke was finely patriotic, and the following letter gives the reason of his desire. "The interesting situation of the Duchess," he wrote to Dr. Rudge from Amorbach in March, 1819, "causes me hourly anxiety, and you, who so well know my views and feelings, can well appreciate how eagerly desirous I am to hasten our departure for Old England. *The event* is thought likely to occur about the end of next

month. My wish is that it may take place on the 3d of June, as that is the birthday of my revered father, and that the child, too, like him, may be Briton born."

But to such pecuniary straits were the royal pair reduced that they had not sufficient money for the journey. The duke's credit was exhausted, the French invasion had left the little principality of Leiningen practically bankrupt. Appeals for loans were refused on every hand, even by the duchess's brother, Prince Leopold, who drew an enormous income from England as the widower of the Princess Charlotte: Prince Leopold and the duke's brothers were afraid of giving offense to the Prince Regent. Finally, however, a devoted friend came to the aid of the distressed pair and they set out, taking with them the Princess Féodore of Leiningen, the duchess's daughter by her first marriage. Such was the duke's anxiety for his wife that he himself drove the great carriage the whole way through Germany to the coast, and when they landed in England, he again drove from Dover to Kensington, where, unknown to the Prince Regent he had secured rooms in the old palace. The Prime Minister was immediately informed of the duchess's condition, and further was asked that the official witnesses, which the

English law requires to be present at the birth of princes and princesses in direct succession to the throne, should be warned in order that they might be in readiness. In duty bound Lord Liverpool acquainted the Prince Regent with the double news of the Duke of Kent's arrival in England and of the expected birth of his child. The Prince Regent was furious and declared he would turn "the Kents out of Kensington Palace," but, utterly regardless as he was of public opinion, the "First Gentleman in Europe," for once listened to wiser counsels, and thus escaped the odium he would have incurred by this inhuman treatment of his sister-in-law.

Such was the history which preceded the birth of the greatest of the English queens. The simplest, the kindest, the purest, the most single-minded of women came into the world in the midst of family scandals, intrigues, and dissensions which had so evil an effect upon the country that more serious-minded people prophesied that the events of the French Revolution must sooner or later be repeated in England.

On May 24, 1819, the Princess Victoria was born, and it was said that, moved by the conviction of his lifetime, her father presented her to the assembled ministers and officials as the

future queen. But a letter written by the duke in answer to congratulations upon the birth of his daughter, in which her possible succession to the throne was mentioned, throws grave doubt upon this statement. "While I have three brothers," he wrote, "senior to myself, and one (the Duke of Clarence) possessing every reasonable prospect of having a family, I should deem it the height of presumption to believe it probable that a future heir to the crown of England would spring from me." Later on, the duke, as we shall see, wrote explicitly on the matter to a friend, but it is scarcely possible that a man with his regard for decorum and good taste could have made a public statement to the highest ministers and officials of the State. The story, however, was carried to the regent, and so bitter was his resentment that it was thought he would openly insult his brother and sister-in-law by declining to appear at the christening, which took place exactly one month after the child's birth. But while he had no regard for appearances, or for public opinion in his own country, the regent hesitated to give offense to foreign powers. He attended the christening ceremony at Kensington Palace, not from any regard for his brother and his wife, but from fear that his absence would be regarded as a

slight by the Emperor Alexander I of Russia. The Emperor was a connection of the Duchess of Kent by marriage, and through his ambassador in London, Prince Lieven, had offered himself as godfather to her child. Alexander at that time was the most powerful sovereign in Europe; this mark of his friendship for England was eagerly accepted both by the Prime Minister and the regent. But the list of names for the child, suggested by the Duke of Kent, roused the regent's jealousy. The duke suggested Alexandrina (after the Emperor Alexander) Georgiana (after the Regent) Augusta (after the child's maternal grandmother, the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg and Saalfeld) and Victoria (after the Duchess of Kent). The regent was annoyed that the emperor's name should be given precedence of his own and said that he wished the child to be given only English names. There were unpleasant discussions, and when the ceremony took place on the 24th of June no list had been prepared for the Archbishop of Canterbury who was to perform the rite.

"By what name does it please your Royal Highness to call this child?" the archbishop asked the regent as the little company at Kensington Palace stood round the gold font that

had been brought from the Tower of London. The regent made no reply.

"Elizabeth, shall she be called Elizabeth?" suggested the archbishop.

"On no account," answered the regent sharply.

"Charlotte, after your Royal Mother and the child's Royal Aunt?" said the archbishop.

"Certainly not," retorted the regent even more brusquely.

"What name is it your Royal Highness's pleasure to command?" then asked the archbishop, anxious to end a scene that was becoming more and more painful, especially to the Duchess of Kent, who burst into tears.

"What is her mother's name?" asked the regent rudely, although he knew it.

"Victoria," said the Duke of Kent.

The Duke of York was standing proxy for the Emperor Alexander and as the archbishop was about to christen the child, the regent having made no comment after the Duke of Kent had spoken, he said "Alexandrina Victoria," either forgetting the much-debated "Georgiana" in the perturbation of the moment, or deliberately leaving it out for fear of offending the regent by giving it as the second name. The archbishop hastily christened the

child and the lamentable scene — the first of many which the Duchess of Kent was called upon to endure—was over.

For some time the little princess was called "Drina" by her parents and half-sister and brother, but the Duchess of Kent was anxious from the first that her child should be known as Victoria to the public, and the "Drina" was therefore dropped.

It had been the Duke of Kent's intention to return to Amorbach as soon as the Duchess's health permitted after the birth of their child. In the quiet of the little principality of Leiningen he was secure from the importunities of his creditors. The position of royal highness in England was an expensive one to maintain; it was, besides, part of the agreement when he married that he should reside abroad. Absolute lack of money, however, made the journey impossible, and despite broad hints from the regent, which finally culminated in a direct intimation that his residence in England was no longer desirable, the duke was compelled to remain at Kensington Palace. The regent, his mind poisoned by stories similar to that of the presentation of the Princess Victoria to the ministers of State as the future queen, saw only a deliberate disregard of his wishes, and openly accused the duke and

" his widow," as he always called the duchess, of desiring to curry popularity with the public. Affront followed affront, the duchess being the special object of the regent's dislike. Pining for her own country, harassed by her husband's debts, and made miserable by the coldness and neglect of his family, it is not surprising that at this moment of her life the Duchess of Kent lost heart. A public insult by the regent at a review was the final blow. The poor duchess fell ill and was ordered a change of air, being particularly advised to go to the seaside. Once more it was necessary to borrow money, and this being obtained the little family went to a small cottage at Sidmouth, a quiet watering place on the coast of Devon, it being the duke's intention to remain there, hidden from his creditors and out of sight of the regent, until the spring when he intended to return to Germany.

Woolbrook Glen, the house at Sidmouth which the duke had taken, was described as " scarcely more than a cottage " and was so damp that in some of the rooms the paper was peeling from the walls, but in the bright sunshine and soft atmosphere of the little watering place the duchess speedily regained her health, and the little princess throve and prospered exceedingly. From the first she had been a healthy

child, and the duke writing to a friend from Sidmouth says: "My little girl thrives under the influence of a Devonshire climate and is, I am delighted to say, strong and healthy; *too healthy*, I fear, in the opinion of some members of my family, by whom she is regarded as an intruder; how largely she contributes to my own happiness at this moment it is needless for me to say to you, who are in such full possession of my feelings on the subject." The duke was justified in his opinion that the little princess was regarded as "an intruder" by some members of his family.

In 1819 the Duchess of Clarence had given birth to a daughter who only lived a few days; the position, therefore, of each of the four elder brothers with regard to the throne was precisely the same as before the marriage of the "bachelor" princes. The position of the Duke of Cumberland, however, was entirely changed by the birth of a daughter to the Duke of Kent, and in the royal family circle the increasing possibility that she would succeed to the crown was viewed both with disfavor and mortification. The disfavor arose from the fact that she was her father's child, the mortification from the fact that the succession of a woman to the crown of England would separate it forever from the

crown of Hanover, and thus deprive the English royal family of a valuable appanage. By the Salic law, which obtained in Hanover, no woman could be the sovereign of that country unless in default of all heirs male, down to the last degree. Each of the three Georges had found their kingdom of Hanover a useful factor, both politically and financially. Its possession gave them a voice in Continental questions, its revenues provided them with the means of buying favorable majorities in the English Parliament, and its government placed many sinecures in their hands which they gave to their sons. Thus the Duke of York, the regent's second brother, was titular Bishop of Osnaburgh and drew the large income of that see although he was a soldier; the Duke of Cambridge was Viceroy of Hanover. If the Princess Victoria became Queen of England, the Duke of Cumberland would become King of Hanover and purely from a family point of view the Duke of Kent's brothers and sisters were grieved by the possibility of the loss of the Hanoverian kingdom to the English royal house. They felt that the English crown would be deprived of part of its patrimony; the possible separation of the two countries was the root cause of the regent's dislike of the Duchess of Kent. The attitude of

the royal family was unreasonable, but families of all degrees are rarely reasonable when it comes to a question of property.

At Sidmouth the Duke of Kent openly spoke of his daughter as the future queen, and used frequently to say to the servants, "Take care of her; she may yet be Queen of England." The story that he used to delight to show the child to people on the beach and say, "Look well at her, for she is to be your queen," is probably a garbled version of some such charming incident as that described by Mrs. Marshall in her book, "In Four Reigns." Mrs. Marshall gives Mrs. Allingham's description of meeting the Duke and Duchess of Kent and the little princess, which shows the duke's kindliness and his pride in his child.

"We were all returning from an excursion in the bright sunshine of the January noon when we saw the royal party crossing the road just before us with their attendants. The Duke and Duchess were linked arm in arm, and the little Princess, in her white swansdown hood, was holding out her hand to her father. I can see now the smile on her rosy face, and the delighted outstretched arms of her father, as he took her from the lady's arms who was her nurse.

"We all waited, drawn up in a line, Stephen on a donkey, the rest on foot. My husband and St. John uncovered, of course, and Stephen tugged at his hat strings. . . . My two girls and I courtesied respectfully and Stella exclaimed, 'What a beautiful baby!'

"The Duchess, hearing Stella's words, turned round with a pleasant smile, and said, 'Would you like to kiss the baby?'

"Stella colored with delight and looked at me for permission. The Duke kindly held the little Princess down toward Stella, and said, 'I am glad my little May-blossom finds favor in your eyes.'

"Then a shout was heard from the donkey where Stephen sat, 'Me, too, please, Duke.'

"Instead of being the least shocked with my boy's freedom, the Duke laughed, and saying, 'Dismount, then,' Stephen scrambled down, and coming up received the longed-for kiss."

Soon after their arrival at Woolbrook Glen the duke had a severe shock. A small boy shooting rabbits sent a bullet by accident through one of the windows of the Princess Victoria's nursery. It passed so close to the child, who was in the arms of her nurse, that it grazed the sleeve of her dress. When the report of the pistol was heard the duke was convinced that

the child was killed, and even when the accident was proved beyond all doubt, he was not able to shake off the effect. The duchess, it is said, thought no more of the matter and rallied her husband upon the depression into which it threw him. About the same time the duke was considering a scheme by which he might relieve himself of the burden of some of his debts. He thought that if he could dispose of his house at Castle Hill, Ealing, the beauty and perfection of which were described in Justice Hardynge's letter, by lottery, a substantial sum would result. But such a proceeding necessitated a private bill being passed by Parliament. Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister, declined to propose the measure, and to his great chagrin the duke was compelled to abandon the idea.

The shock of the child's narrow escape from death told upon the duke's constitution, which was already undermined by the unceasing worry of his debts and the difficulties of his position. On January 20, 1820, he went for a long country walk with his equerry, Captain Conroy, (afterwards Sir John Conroy) and returned to the Glen with his shoes and stockings soaked with wet. He was begged to change them at once, but remained playing and romping with the little princess until it was time to dress for

dinner. During the evening he was taken ill, a doctor was sent for, but the duke had a horror of medicine and declined to take the prescription ordered, saying he would be quite well in the morning. The next morning, however, found him in a raging fever, inflammation of the lungs set in, and at ten o'clock on the 23d he died. The duke met death with the fortitude and deep religion that had characterized him throughout his life, blaming himself for not having followed the doctor's advice.

"Nothing could be more exemplary," says Sir Frederick Wetherell, one of the most devoted of his gentlemen, "than the religious bearing of my late dear master, the Duke of Kent. His Royal Highness was only aware of his state on Saturday the 22d. He executed his will toward night; and after that he took leave of his gentlemen, but, on our retiring, he sent for me to come back, and in much conversation with me on many subjects, he forgave as he hoped to be forgiven. It was the Duke's intention to have received the sacrament, but it was delayed until the following morning, which was too late. When I left his bedside he had begun to doze and wander, and it was about two o'clock on the Sunday morning that he gave his dying injunctions to the Duchess, who for many days

and nights never left him—never, in fact, till all was over.

The duke died in Sir Frederick's arms, and just before the end, drawing a ring from his finger and giving it to his faithful old friend, said, "Take it! It is my last gift on earth."

The duchess was worn out by grief and devotion. For five days and nights she had never taken off her clothes, remaining by her husband's bed from the moment he was taken ill. But even in her terror and anxiety that the illness might prove fatal she was not spared the stings of family rancor. Immediately the gravity of the duke's situation was made known to the Prince Regent he sent a peremptory message ordering his brother to appoint guardians to the little Princess Victoria, in the event of his death, his intention being that the duke should name members of the royal family. But in the will drawn up on the evening of the 22d the duke appointed the duchess as sole guardian to his daughter, "to all intents and for all purposes whatever," with Sir Frederick Wetherell, and Sir John Conroy as executors. The Prince Regent and his brothers, later on, did not hesitate to say that this will was made at the instigation of the duchess.

It is difficult to conceive a more pathetic posi-

tion than that of the Duchess of Kent at this moment. She was "again a widow, and alone and unknown in England," as she herself said, "friendless and alone in a country that was not her own." Six days after her husband's death the aged King George III died at Windsor and the Prince Regent became King George IV, which made a momentous change in the prospects of the Princess Victoria, since only the lives of her two uncles, the Duke of York, who was fifty-seven, and the Duke of Clarence, who was fifty-five, stood between her and the throne.

The situation of the duchess and of the future Queen of England was indeed curious, judged by future events. Everything the duchess had inherited from her husband she gave up to his creditors. She had forfeited the larger part of the income left her by her first husband on her second marriage, she had no legal home in England, and what was worse no ready money, for her widow's jointure granted by Parliament at her marriage, was not paid for many months afterwards. The new king and his brothers made no effort to help their unhappy sister-in-law, and if her own brother, Prince Leopold, had not come to her assistance her situation would have been desperate. In the midst of her grief she made the momentous decision that not only

affected her daughter's whole life, but likewise the welfare of the English nation. She decided to remain in England. "We stood alone," she wrote years afterwards, "almost friendless and alone in this country. I could not even speak the language of it. I did not hesitate how to act: I gave up my home, my kindred, my duties" (as Regent of Leiningen) "to devote myself to that duty which was to be the sole object of my future life."

The duchess would have been within her legal rights and, after the unvarying coldness and direct unkindness with which she had been treated by her husband's family, she would have had some measure of justification, if she had returned to Germany and taken the Princess Victoria with her. But deeply as she loved her German kinsfolk, and strongly as she felt the gravity of resigning her son's fortunes and principality to the care of others, she realized that a higher duty lay before her, and that for her child's sake alone it was essential that the Princess should be brought up in England. A sovereign, though of English birth, trained abroad would have found little favor in the eyes of the English people, whose insularity was then even more strongly marked than it is to-day. Prince Leopold was one of the wisest and most subtle

diplomatists of his day and it was he who urged upon his sister the future that in all probability awaited her daughter.

The duke was buried with all royal pomp and ceremony at Windsor, and leaving Sidmouth the unhappy duchess returned to Kensington Palace to begin the task which for the next eighteen years occupied her every thought and care. As a beginning she set herself to learn English in order that the infant princess should hear nothing spoken in her earliest years except her native tongue, and with such success, that in a short time she spoke the language fluently though always with a strong German accent.

A year after the Duke of Kent's death the Duchess of Clarence gave birth to another daughter, who if she had lived would have been Queen of England. Within a few months, however, the infant died, and as it was scarcely probable that the Duchess of Clarence would have any more children, the ultimate succession of the Princess Victoria was regarded, even by the royal family, as assured.

CHAPTER II

THE DUKE OF CUMBERLAND—THE QUEEN'S EARLY LIFE AT KENSINGTON

EW mothers have been faced by so difficult a task as the Duchess of Kent. Widowed within twenty months of her marriage to the fourth son of George III, scarcely speaking the language of the country over which her daughter was to rule, an object of open dislike to the powerful members of her husband's family, she was left utterly alone to train an heir to the throne of a great country. Her daughter's life both as a queen and a woman has shown the whole world how she achieved her task. The sweetness, tenderness, and affection of Queen Victoria's character, her true womanliness, which throughout her long reign was the salient trait that struck everybody who came into her presence from prime ministers down to the wives of cottagers, she undoubtedly owed to the seclusion of her early years, and their constant companionship with her mother.

Straitness of means was always given as the reason for the extreme seclusion in which the duchess brought up her daughter, and although this was undoubtedly a contributory cause, there must have been an ever-present fear in her mind, a fear that made her keep the child-princess constantly with her in the daytime, and in her room at night. Queen Victoria had never slept away from her mother's side one single night until she ascended the throne.

It was no secret in court circles that the Duke of Cumberland aspired to the crown and that his aspiration received the tacit support of George IV. He was universally detested, and such was his general conduct that a special act of Parliament was drawn up by Lord Eldon in order to protect him from newspaper comment; his name was of course not specifically mentioned, but the scandals published in the press against him were so frequent and so gross that they were rightly considered as damaging to the prestige of the whole royal family. The reason of Lord Eldon's Act was therefore clearly apparent to the world. Before the Duke of Cumberland's marriage, the mysterious murder of his valet Sallis, and the amazing contradictions between the obvious facts and the evidence at the inquest, added horror in the public opinion

to a reputation already badly smirched. According to the duke's story the valet had suddenly attacked him with a sword in the dark in his bedroom. The duke had summoned assistance, and had been found to be slightly wounded. On entering the valet's room the other servants found him lying on his bed with his throat cut, but in a position absolutely incompatible with the statement advanced that having failed in his attack on the duke he had committed suicide. The condition of the room and many other essential details, were in direct opposition to the story told by the duke, and despite the verdict that proclaimed the valet an attempted murderer and a suicide, an ineffaceable impression of the duke's guilt remained on the public mind.

It is not surprising therefore, that when his ambition to become King of England spread from the court to general society, a suspicion that he would make some attempt to prevent the succession of his niece, and so secure the throne for himself, was discussed openly in London drawing-rooms, and is frequently mentioned in private letters of the time.

By the Salic law, Princess Victoria could not succeed to the crown of Hanover. The duke contended that the law applied not only to

Hanover but to the Hanoverian dynasty, and for that reason no woman of the Hanoverian dynasty could succeed to the crown of England. It was an absurd argument but an argument fraught with menace to a mother in the isolated position of the Duchess of Kent. How much or how little the duchess knew of the Duke of Cumberland's schemes and vaporings never transpired. She maintained an absolute silence upon the subject, and was only known to have hinted at her knowledge upon one occasion. This was during the reign of William IV and at a time when the Duke of Cumberland and his faction were spreading stories abroad that the Princess Victoria could not speak English, that she was delicate, badly brought up, with the hope of making her unpopular. The Duke of Cumberland's stepson [1] on the conclusion of a visit to England went to take his leave of the Duchess of Kent. As he was saying good-by he made some complimentary reference to the Princess Victoria, whom he had seen for the first time during this visit. "Let them know in Berlin you think well of her," answered the duchess. "I am afraid she has enemies, but her friends outnumber her enemies." As the Duke

[1] Prince Frederick of Solms-Braunfels, the Duchess of Cumberland's son by her first husband, from whom she was divorced.

of Cumberland was then living in Berlin his sister-in-law's meaning was unmistakable.

It will be remembered that when the careless boy shooting rabbits at Sidmouth sent a bullet through the window of the Princess Victoria's nursery, the Duke of Kent was in an agony of apprehension. He himself had said that his daughter was regarded as an "intruder" by some of the members of his family. At the first moment he believed the accident to be a deliberate attempt upon her life, and even when the accident was made clear beyond all possible doubt, he could not shake off the effects of the shock. The duchess went so far as to rally him upon his nervousness, but it would seem that in the few days of his rapid illness he succeeded in imbuing her with his fears as to their child's safety. For after his death she began to exercise the same care and watchfulness of which she had made gentle fun to her husband and others during his lifetime. The duke's will gave what was practically a public declaration of his fears, since it excluded every member of his family from any right or authority over the person of his child.

The duchess now began the task which she had set herself, and for the next seven years remained in close seclusion at Kensington Pal-

ace. Each year visits were paid to the duchess's brother and adviser, Prince Leopold, at Claremont near Esher, and each year the little princess was taken to the seaside for change of air. The child was remarkably healthy and strong from the outset, the first characteristic that struck everybody who saw her being the luster and intensity of her beautiful blue eyes: they are referred to constantly in diaries and records of the period. From the outset her life was arranged with the utmost regularity, and as she grew older her day was carefully mapped out. At eight o'clock she breakfasted with her mother; in summer the meal was served out-of-doors, a custom the queen continued until the end of her life. Lessons, walks, drives, occupied the rest of the day. Simplicity, thoroughness, regularity, and carefulness with regard to money formed the basis of the duchess's scheme for training her daughter, qualities that were afterwards strongly marked in the queen's character.

The little princess's only playmate was her half-sister the Princess Féodore of Leiningen, but she was allowed to receive occasional visits from the children of her mother's gentlemen in waiting. The only members of the royal family who took any particular interest in her were her father's unmarried sisters, the Prin-

cesses Sophia and Augusta, and the Duchess of Clarence, who were her mother's firm friends. The Duchess of Kent was a mother of her time, that is, a stern disciplinarian, but she adored her child and talked of her ceaselessly and in the manner recorded by Lady Granville in her "Letters." "I had almost forgotten to talk of my royal morning. I spent two hours at Cleveland House with the Duchess of Gloucester,[1] an amiable good soul who talks of Trimmer and Mr. Hodson; the Duchess of Clarence, ugly, but with a good *tournure* and manner; the Duchess of Kent, very pleasing indeed, and raving of her baby. 'C'est mon bonheur, mes délices, mon existence. C'est l'image du feu roi!'[2] Think of the baby! They say it is the Roi George in petticoats, so fat it can scarcely waddle."

Princess Féodore of Leiningen was twelve years older than Princess Victoria, and had for her governess a remarkable woman called Fräulein Lehzen, a Hanoverian, who in 1823 began the education of the future queen. She also was a stern disciplinarian, but while the princess was afraid of her she loved her dearly, and they were

[1] Fourth daughter of George III. She married her cousin, the Duke of Gloucester.

[2] It is my happiness, my delight, my existence. It is the image of the late king. This was in the autumn of 1820, when George III was the "late king."

on terms of the closest intimacy until the governess's death in 1870 when Queen Victoria wrote: " She knew me from six months old, and from my fifth to my eighteenth years devoted all her care and energies to me with most wonderful abnegation of self, never even taking one day's holiday. I adored, though I was greatly in awe of her. She really seemed to have no thought but for me."

Two years later the question of the princess's education was brought before Parliament, and without any discussion the Duchess of Kent was allowed an extra £6,000 a year " for the purpose of making an adequate provision for the honorable support and education of her Highness Princess Alexandrina Victoria of Kent."

A clergyman, the Rev. George Davys, was appointed official preceptor, and it was he who chose the masters for special subjects, instructing the princess himself in history and religious knowledge. In the last regard his chief aim was to imbue his royal pupil with a spirit of toleration, a quality absolutely essential to the position she was to occupy, and it was owing to Mr. Davys and her mother that to the end of her life differences of religious opinion had no significance to the queen. Fräulein Lehzen naturally did not like the change, but the prin-

cess still continued to do certain lessons with her, and at the suggestion of the Princess Sophia her devotion was rewarded by George IV, who created her a Hanoverian baroness, and she remained with the princess until she became queen.

The knowledge that she would be queen was carefully kept from the little girl until she was twelve years old. There is a popular story that the child herself made the discovery during a history lesson when she was studying a genealogical table of the kings of England, but the story is not true. Thirty years afterwards Baroness Lehzen wrote the following account to the queen. "I ask your leave to cite some remarkable words of yours when only twelve years old, when the Regency Bill was in progress. I then said to the Duchess of Kent that now, for the first time, you ought to know your place in the succession. H. R. H. agreed with me, and I put the genealogical table into the historical book. When Mr. Davys had gone, the Princess Victoria opened as usual the book again, and seeing the additional paper, said, 'I never saw that before.' 'It was not necessary that you should, Princess,' I answered. 'I see I am nearer the throne than I thought.' 'So it is,' I said. After some moments the Princess

resumed: 'Many a child would boast but they do not know the difficulty. There is much splendor but more responsibility.' The Princess having lifted up the forefinger of her right hand before she spoke, gave me her little hand saying, 'I will be good. I understand now why you urge me so much to learn even Latin. My aunts Augusta and Mary never did, but you told me that Latin was the foundation of English grammar and of all the elegant expressions, and I learned it as you wished. But I understand all better now.' And she gave me her little hand repeating, 'I will be good.'"

But this account, to quote the queen's own words, is "not quite accurate." At no period of her life was Queen Victoria a prig, and only a prig could have expressed herself at twelve years of age in the language put into her mouth by her old governess. The queen always admitted that she actually learned her place in the succession from a genealogical table being placed in her hands, but she used to smile and shake her head at the fine sentiments recorded by the baroness. That lady was a devoted admirer of Mrs. Trimmer, Mrs. Turner, and other writers for the young at that period, and the Princess Victoria's supposed remarks about Latin being the "foundation of English gram-

mar and of all the elegant expressions" might be taken verbatim from one of the speeches of the overpowering children in "The Fairchild Family," or one of Mrs. Barbauld's self-conscious Lucys or Carolines. Thirty-seven years had elapsed between the occurrence and the recital, and the baroness's love and admiration for her pupil undoubtedly colored her memory. The Princess Victoria was too natural, too simple, too healthy-minded to care a pin's point about "elegant expressions." Young as she was she realized the responsibility, and in place of the pretty platitudes of the Baroness Lehzen, the queen said that when she was informed of her future position she "was overwhelmed by the responsibility," and added, "I cried much on hearing of it."

Her Majesty used to say that from her earliest years she had a vague idea of the position of affairs, and this is borne out by Sir Walter Scott, who wrote in his diary of May 19, 1828: "Dined with the Duchess of Kent; was very kindly received by Prince Leopold and presented to the little Princess Victoria, the heir-apparent to the throne, as things now stand. This lady is educated with much care, and is so closely watched that no busy maid has a moment to whisper, 'You are heir of England.' I

suspect, if we could dissect the little heart, we should find some pigeon or other bird of the air had carried the matter."

It was scarcely possible that a child so observant that she asked her nurse when little more than a baby, "Why do all the gentlemen raise their hats to me and not to Féodore?" could be kept in absolute ignorance of her future position, but her mother succeeded in her object.

The duchess, very rightly, was of the opinion that knowledge of future greatness could have no good effect upon a child's character. Her sole desire was to make her daughter a good woman. Sycophancy was not permitted among her attendants; no difference was made between the half-sisters, with the result that notwithstanding the vague knowledge of impending greatness, there was no conceit or pride of place in the child's nature, and that when the moment arrived when it was essential she should be told the truth, she realized the cares of her great position rather than its pleasures.

A strain of willfulness in the little lady's character further justified the duchess in her opinion. One day during a music lesson her master was obliged to find fault, saying, "There is no royal road to music. Princess, you must practice

like everybody else." The child immediately locked the piano, and putting the key in her pocket, retorted, "There, now! You see there is no 'must' about it at all."

These exhibitions of willfulness, which developed into strength of character and firmness of purpose in later years, were rare, but were instantly repressed by the watchful mother.

On the other hand there were countless indications of warmth of heart and feeling as on the occasion of a children's ball given by the Duke of Gloucester. She saw her uncle, the Duke of Sussex, leaving the room without taking leave of her mother. "Won't you give me a kiss before you go?" she asked, running after him. When the duke stooped to kiss her, she whispered in his ear, "You have forgotten to say good night to mamma."

Here was tact and consideration for the feelings of others which no training could have supplied had it been lacking in the character.

Once, when coming out of a shop where she had just bought a doll for six shillings—six shillings for which she had been obliged to wait until her allowance became due, as her mother, with the example of the late Duke of Kent before her and all the miseries his money troubles had brought, would never allow the princess on

any pretext to forestall, or to spend more than the quarterly sum allotted to her for pocket-money—she saw a poor beggar who asked her for help. The child hesitated; the six shillings was all she had left of her allowance after other purchases and her little charities. The doll was a long-desired treasure. She looked at the poor beggar, then at the doll, and before her attendants realized her intention, darted into the shop, and giving back the doll asked for the six shillings. The shopman promised to keep it for her, but scarcely listening she ran out to the beggar and thrust all the money into his hands.

The keen interest in her domestic affairs which she afterwards evinced was also foreshadowed in her childhood. One day when she and her mother were paying a visit to Queen Adelaide, the wife of William IV, the princess was asked to choose the greatest treat she would like to have. She begged eagerly to be allowed to clean all the windows of the palace and was quite crestfallen when Queen Adelaide pointed out the impossibility.

As king, George IV showed no more consideration for his sister-in-law, the Duchess of Kent, than he had shown as regent. He refused her her proper position at court as mother of the heiress-presumptive to the throne, which

the duchess had claimed for her daughter's sake, and although he saw his niece from time to time he showed her no affection. He could not, however, fail to be pleased by the child's tact. Upon one of the rare occasions the duchess and her daughter were bidden to Windsor, the king asked the little Princess Victoria what tune she wished the band to play. "'God save the king,' if you please, Uncle King," she answered.

Carlton House had no attractions for the Duchess of Kent, and, apart from the ever-present fear of the Duke of Cumberland, she kept her daughter as secluded as possible lest any breath of the contaminating influences by which her brother-in-law, the king, was surrounded should touch her.

The court of George IV was a public scandal: the king himself was more often drunk than sober, whilst the character of some of the ladies about the sovereign made it impossible for the duchess to receive them. The king complained bitterly that the duchess purposely kept his niece away from him, as she undoubtedly did.

CHAPTER III

THE QUEEN'S EDUCATION—HER ACCESSION TO THE THRONE

HE death of the Duke of York in 1827 left only the Duke of Clarence between the Princess Victoria and the throne, and, when three years later George IV died, and his brother succeeded him as William IV, the eleven-year-old child stood next in succession. A bill was unanimously passed by Parliament which entirely safeguarded the princess from the Duke of Cumberland. It decreed that in the event of the death of William IV during the minority of his niece her mother, the Duchess of Kent, was to act as regent, and at the same time it added £10,000 a year to the duchess's income "on behalf of the Princess." In both the House of Lords and the House of Commons the country's satisfaction with the manner in which the future queen was being trained and educated was voiced in no uncertain manner by members of both political parties. Exaggerated

stories of every kind had been set abroad by the court of George IV and by the Duke of Cumberland as to the duchess's training of the child. She was even accused of being cruel to the princess, while the Cumberland faction declared that the child could not speak English; this was done in order that she might be made unpopular among the people. The Duke of Cumberland was so enraged when one of his own gentlemen, an Englishman, said in public that Princess Victoria could not speak German as well as he did and her English was perfect, that he threatened him with dismissal. Parliament now gave these and other stories the lie direct—the first of the rewards that came to the duchess for her self-sacrifice and unceasing care. When the news of the passing of the Regency Bill was brought to Kensington Palace, the duchess burst into tears and exclaimed, "This is the first really happy day I have had since I lost the Duke of Kent."

But during the next seven years the duchess experienced much unhappiness and heartburning which, unfortunately, were due, in no small measure, to her own tactlessness.

William IV, a bluff, hearty sailor, unlike his predecessor, had a proper idea of his duties toward his heir, although he was bitterly jealous

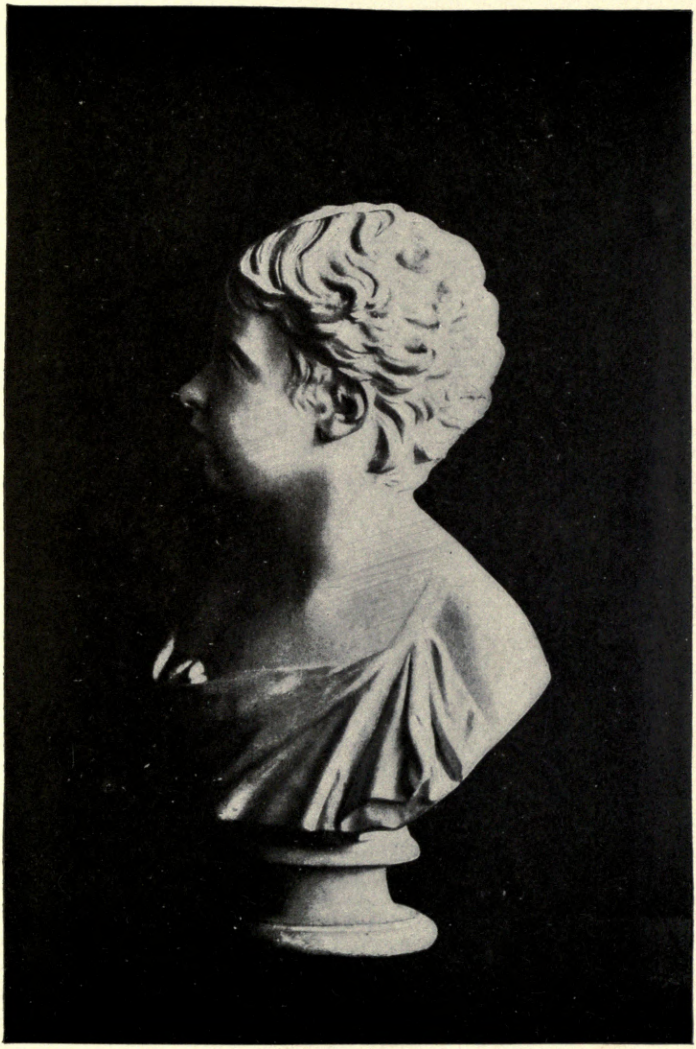
of her mother, whom he had always disliked. A State governess was appointed in the person of the Duchess of Northumberland, and her old tutor, Dr. Davys, was made Dean of Chester, in short the princess was given all the appanage of an heiress to the throne. The king commanded that she should attend the drawing-rooms at court, which she did from time to time, standing by Queen Adelaide's side. She was present also at the prorogation of Parliament rendered necessary by the king's accession, and on this occasion was publicly presented to her future subjects by her aunt, the queen.

Parliament had given the Duchess of Kent charge of the princess by the Regency Bill and the king was therefore unable in any way to interfere with her upbringing or her liberty. He could only command as the sovereign: the Duchess of Kent did not always obey his commands. She resented deeply an incident which occurred shortly after William's accession. It was the custom of the members of the royal family, in those days, after Parliament had voted them an allowance, or an increased allowance, to attend a sitting of the House of Lords, their attendance being regarded as an expression of their thanks. After William IV's Civil List had been voted by Parliament, together

with the allowance to Queen Adelaide during his lifetime, and her jointure in the event of his death, as well as the increased allowance of £10,000 a year to the Duchess of Kent for the Princess Victoria, the king and queen and the Duchess of Kent attended the House of Lords. But to the duchess's intense chagrin instead of following immediately after the king and queen, which she considered her proper precedence as mother of the future queen, by the king's own arrangement she was obliged to follow his sister, the Princess Augusta. It was William's intention to show the duchess and the House of Lords, crowded with peers and peeresses, that whatever Parliament might have decided, his sister-in-law had gained no higher position in the royal family itself, and that she would never be regarded as anything more than the Duchess of Kent. In consequence of this public slight the duchess kept her daughter away from the drawing-rooms as much as possible. The king complained and expostulated, but the duchess held her ground. In the following year King William and Queen Adelaide were crowned in Westminster Abbey and, to the amazement of the court and country, neither the Duchess of Kent nor the Princess Victoria was present at the ceremony. Again it was a question of prece-

dence. The king had insisted that the Princess Victoria should follow his brothers both in the public procession and in the abbey; the duchess insisted that as heir to the throne the child should precede her royal uncles. Neither would give way and the duchess declined to allow her daughter to attend the ceremony, nor did she go herself. The little princess was bitterly disappointed. She used to tell her children that she cried for hours when her mother decided that she should not go to the abbey. "Nothing could console me," she said, "not even my dolls."

In the meantime the life at Kensington continued much upon the old lines. From a time-table called "Distribution of the Day for the Princess Victoria," we find that she worked at her lessons for five hours every day, two hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon, with an hour and a half in the morning and an hour in the afternoon for "walking or playing." There was also half an hour for "playing" before bedtime. Reports of her progress were submitted at regular intervals to the duchess by her various masters. The reports sent in when the princess became the direct heir, and when the duchess wished to meet the charges of the Cumberland faction that the child's education had been neglected, are



ALEXANDRINA VICTORIA.

From a bust made of her at the age of ten, by William Behnes.

especially interesting as they throw sidelights upon her character. The duchess was anxious to obtain an unbiased opinion upon her method of education, and submitted these reports to the Bishop of London and the Bishop of Lincoln, the two foremost men in the Church of England. This is Dr. Davys's letter.

"MADAM: "March 2nd, 1830.

"Your Royal Highness will herewith receive a list of books which the Princess Victoria has been reading during the last four years; and your Royal Highness will, I trust, have observed that this course of study has supplied the Princess with a degree of information as great as, at such an age, could be expected.

"During the last year the Princess has made considerable progress. That absence of mind, which your Royal Highness had for some time so much lamented in the Princess, has been in a great measure corrected by the improving understanding of her Highness; and there is now much reason to believe that the powers of exertion will every day be growing stronger, and that there will be corresponding progress in all subjects connected with the education of the Princess.

"I am afraid of saying too much, because my

feelings toward the Princess may prevent me from being an impartial judge, but it certainly is my expectation (as much as it is my most sincere desire) that the disposition and attainments of the Princess will be such as to gratify the anxious wishes, as well as to reward the earnest exertions, with which your Royal Highness has watched over the education of the princess.

"I have the honour to be, madam, your Royal Highness's most dutiful and grateful servant,

"GEORGE DAVYS."

Then follows a list of the books read in the princess's lessons, in the years 1826, 1827, 1828, and 1829, some hundred in "Religion," "Moral Stories," "History," "Geography," "Grammar," "Natural History," "Poetry," "General Knowledge," and "Latin."

The French master reported that she did not write the language so well as she spoke it, and begged that she might devote more time to its study, although she was more advanced than children of her age usually were. He gave a list of twenty-four books. The German master gave a favorable report which concluded with: "It may be asserted that she knows most words of common occurrence (about 1,500). Finally

we have the opinion of the arithmetic and writing master.

"Mr. Steward most respectfully informs her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Kent, that he considers the Princess Victoria has a peculiar talent for Arithmetic. Her correctness in working sums, and Her quickness in comprehending the explanation of Her rules are excellent.

"If the Princess endeavors to imitate Her Writing Examples Her Success is certain.

"March 2, 1830."

The two bishops not only considered the reports but they examined the princess herself—a painful ordeal for a little girl of eleven years of age. They wrote the duchess a long letter in which they state "most respectfully," "our entire approval of that course both as to the choice of subjects and the arrangement of Her Highness's studies," and give their opinion "that the Princess should continue, at least for some time to come, to pursue her studies upon the same plan which has been hitherto followed, and under the same superintendence."

Supported by the opinion of the bishops the Duchess of Kent continued the educational course, the Duchess of Northumberland not

being allowed to interfere, nor to see her pupil alone. In the discharge of her duties she heard the princess play the piano, recite, and inspected her drawing books and copy books and made official reports of her progress, but the Duchess of Kent never allowed the post of state governess to become anything more than a formality. The Duchess of Northumberland attended the princess whenever she appeared at public ceremonies, and it was said that William IV intended that she should lead his niece by the hand in the coronation procession instead of her mother. But, although she took no part in her education, Princess Victoria undoubtedly owed to her state governess that exquisite dignity of bearing which distinguished her throughout her life. The Duchess of Kent, despite her royal birth, was "homely" both in appearance and manner. She was warm-hearted and impulsive, qualities which were reflected in her movements. The Duchess of Northumberland, on the other hand, was one of the most graceful and dignified women of her time; she was the wife of one of the great nobles of England, and herself came of an ancient Welsh family. She was chosen for the difficult post not so much for her exalted position but because William IV, (probably prompted by

Queen Adelaide, who was devoted to her niece by marriage), realized the necessity of such an example as would be given to the princess by the duchess's graciousness and perfection of manner. The duchess became very fond of her state pupil and described her as "the most upright child she ever knew, and yet arch. One could do anything with her if one gained her affections."

Queen Victoria used to speak of the "sadness and unhappiness" of her childhood. She was a lonely child, and although her half-sister, the Princess Féodore of Leiningen, was many years older she was her only companion. When she married the Prince of Hohenlohe-Langenburg in 1828 and went to live in Germany, Princess Victoria missed her sorely. Three years later her uncle, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, who had been a second father to her, and of whom she was almost as fond as of her mother, accepted the offer of the throne of Belgium, and left England; about the same time her maternal grandmother, the Dowager Duchess of Saxe-Coburg, who had always taken the keenest interest in her welfare, died. Princess Victoria was a child of deep affection; the loss of her half-sister's companionship, and the removal of the beloved uncle, whom she and her mother

had consulted in every detail, affected her so acutely that her health began to suffer. Sir John Conroy declared stoutly that her body was being stunted by continually poring over books, that she was being over-educated, and that by shutting her up the Duchess of Kent was "playing the Duke of Cumberland's game." Whatever the cause, grief or over-education, at this time the princess lost her brilliant complexion and her spirits; she moped and became most unhappy. Sir John Conroy suggested a tour through England, urging on the duchess the necessity of the future queen getting to know her future subjects and being known by them. The advice was sound and was immediately acted upon by the duchess, who viewed with alarm the state of her daughter's health.

There was a bad outbreak of cholera in London in 1832 and it was essential that the heir to the throne should be removed as far as possible from any danger of contagion. Claremont, which may be described as the second home of the princess's childhood, was too near the capital, and besides would only awaken the grief at the absence of Prince Leopold, by that time become King of the Belgians. The Duchess of Northumberland hinted that if a visit were paid to North Wales she could promise the mother

and daughter a magnificent reception. Fired by the advice given her as to the necessity for the princess appearing in public, and agitated by the spread of the cholera, the Duchess of Kent eagerly accepted the suggestion, and set off in state for Beaumaris in the Isle of Anglesey. The Duchess of Northumberland had spoken truly; the whole country of Wales burst into a fervor of patriotic enthusiasm. Bonfires blazed on the mountain tops, Welsh bards in the old Druid costumes sang pæons of adulation, flowers were flung by the excited crowds in every town and village, the roads were lined with cheering people, who had waited for hours to see the princess pass.

It was a violent transition from the seclusion of Kensington Palace (where, although Princess Victoria knew she would be queen, there was no outward sign, and where she was entirely under the discipline of her masters and governesses) to this triumphal journey through lines of shouting Welshmen, who called out her name and cheered her as she drove by. At first the little princess was overcome with shyness, but the courage which never deserted her, came to her aid. She was suffused with blushes, she was diffident, but when she performed her first public ceremony—the giving of the prizes to

the poets who had competed in what in Wales is called an Eisteddfod—child as she was, there was an air, a gracious dignity, which set the chivalrous Welshmen aflame. The noise, the shouting, the waving of flags, and the booming of guns frightened her, but she concealed her timidity and needed no prompting from her mother.

The summer of 1832 was spent in North Wales, and it was there that the Princess Victoria first made acquaintance with the magnificence and wealth of the English aristocracy. Their triumphal tour over, the mother and daughter went to a quiet inn at Beaumaris. But scarcely had they settled there when cholera broke out in the neighborhood. The duchess was in despair. She did not know what to do, where to go. The Marquis of Anglesey, who had lost his leg at the Battle of Waterloo, and was the *preux chevalier* of his day, heard of the difficult situation. With princely generosity he placed his beautiful house, Plas Newydd, at the duchess and the princess's disposal, and there they remained for some time. Queen Victoria never forgot this hospitality extended to her in her childhood, and until the end of her life there was always a Paget—the family name of the Marquises of Anglesey—holding some post or office at her court.

The return journey to London was actually a royal progress, the princess and her mother going from town to town, and staying at the houses of great noblemen in their way. It was a triumph for the Duchess of Kent, and as for the princess, so much good had been achieved by the change that she had grown in stature and was completely restored to health. In the following years these progresses were repeated, and with similar success, the princess being received everywhere with enthusiasm.

William IV, however, viewed the growing popularity of his successor with scarcely concealed jealousy. He was always anxious to do his duty by her, but at the same time he disliked her being brought into public notice, and he vented his displeasure upon the Duchess of Kent. The attitude of the duchess during these progresses, her receiving addresses from towns for the princess, and replying to them, as well as the general tenor of her speeches, certainly laid her open to the charge of tactlessness, and she was in no small degree responsible for the bitter quarrels that now broke out between herself and the king. The quarrels were petty upon both sides, and when the king gave an order forbidding salutes to be fired in honor of the duchess and princess when they were visit-

ing the naval ports, the duchess retorted by keeping her daughter away from court. It says much for the sweetness of Queen Victoria's disposition that the family quarrels in the reign of George IV, and the open differences between her mother and William IV, left no bitterness. The earlier quarrels were doubtless kept from her knowledge, but children are sensitive to atmosphere. The tact she showed when quite a little girl on the rare occasions she saw King George was regarded by those about her as a sign that she knew the strained relations between her mother and himself. Her attitude to William IV showed clearly that, while she obeyed her mother, she took no side in the dissension. William IV admitted that his niece had invariably treated him as her sovereign and her uncle, that she had "never failed in attention or respect," and that she had "a kind, grateful heart."

Each year the feeling between the king and the duchess grew deeper and more bitter, and as she was the object round which their discussion raged, the princess's position became so difficult that to the onlookers it seemed she must be forced to take sides sooner or later. The situation culminated in 1836 when William IV, at a state banquet at Windsor which he gave in

PRINCESS VICTORIA, IN 1835.

From a painting by G. Hayter, Esq.

honor of his birthday, publicly declared that he wished to live until his niece came of age in order that "the kingdom might be spared the regency which Parliament had designed for the Duchess of Kent." The duchess was sitting by his side and the Princess Victoria opposite to him. Beside himself with anger, he said that the duchess was "a person surrounded by evil advisers and incompetent to act with propriety," and then burst out, "I have no hesitation in saying that I have been insulted —grossly and continually insulted—by that person, but I am determined to endure no longer a course of behaviour so disrespectful to me. Among many other things I have particularly to complain of the manner in which that young lady (the Princess Victoria) has been kept away from my Court; she has been repeatedly kept from my drawing-rooms, at which she ought always to have been present; but I am fully resolved that this shall not happen again. I would have her know that I am King, and I am determined to make my authority respected, and for the future I shall insist and command that the Princess do upon all occasions appear at my Court, as it is her duty to do."

It was a terrible moment for a young girl, the brilliant company aghast, the angry, red-

faced king opposite to her, Queen Adelaide in the deepest distress, her insulted mother sitting with a face of stone, all eyes turned upon the princess. No wonder she "burst into tears."

The princess obeyed her uncle, but the quarrel between him and her mother was now final. In the following year she attained her eighteenth birthday, the date fixed for her coming of age, and the king proposed that she should have a separate household apart from her mother, even going so far as to write to the duchess herself on the subject, but the latter declined the offer, and not graciously. In order to show the princess that he dissociated her entirely from her mother in their quarrel, the king offered her directly an allowance of £10,000 a year (from his private purse) "to be at her disposal independently of her mother." The duchess was not consulted and to her intense annoyance the princess accepted her uncle's generosity.

Again the princess was torn between her duty and her affection, but some feeling of independence had undoubtedly been aroused in the preceding months. After a triumphal progress through the north of England, during which much comment was made upon the fact that the Duchess of Kent seemed to be placing herself

before her daughter, it was arranged that the princess should open a pier at Southampton. The princess and her mother were then residing at Norris Castle in the Isle of Wight. During the short voyage across the Solent something in the princess's manner annoyed her mother, and when on their arrival at Southampton the town authorities waiting to receive them treated the duchess as the second person in importance, she lost her temper, and said that "On reflection" she had decided that the princess "should not come forward at so public a ceremony," and that she herself would open the pier. Despite the entreaties of the mayor of the town the duchess carried out the programme arranged for her daughter, who was bitterly wounded by her mother's attitude. Her disappointment and feeling of wounded pride notwithstanding "her face was as inanimate as a block of wood during the ceremony," to quote the words of one of the suite in attendance.

Such an incident would leave a lasting impression on the mind of a girl of seventeen, and more especially upon a girl of the princess's character. Her mental attitude toward her own position was never really understood except by the few who were admitted to her intimate friendship. From the moment that she knew

she was to be Queen of England she considered that a sacred duty had been laid upon her. She believed in every fiber of her being that she was queen, not only as she was styled "by the Grace of God," but by the will of God. She did not regard her position from the personal point of view. She obeyed her mother, she was an excellent daughter, but she deeply resented any encroachment upon her prerogative — not the prerogative of the Princess Victoria, but the prerogative of the heiress to the throne. There were no subtleties in Queen Victoria's character; there has never yet existed a truly great man or woman who was subtle. It is not easy to convey the detachment that existed in her mind between the queen and the woman, but the two were entirely separate, and difficulties and encroachments the woman would have overlooked and have forgiven, the Queen never forgot, even when those who encroached upon her rights as queen or queen-presumptive were her nearest and dearest. She did not regard such encroachments as a slight upon herself personally, but upon the position she occupied, and that position she believed she was called upon to fill by the divine will.

I have entered into this explanation here because it will account in some measure for the

Princess Victoria's attitude toward her mother when she ascended the throne.[1]

The Duchess of Kent considered herself slighted by the king's direct offer, but the princess was legally of age and could do as she pleased. Nevertheless her position with regard to her mother might have been extremely painful. But death put an end to the difficulty, for only a few weeks later the king died. He had been in indifferent health since the beginning of June, but his death on the twentieth of the month came somewhat suddenly. The Duchess of Kent was certainly unprepared for the news.

The story of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne has all the elements of romance, but its most romantic and dramatic moment was when she learned that she was the ruler of millions.

King William died at Windsor at two o'clock in the morning, the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Howley) performing the last rites of the Church. It was the duty of the Lord Chamberlain (the Marquis Conyngham) to inform the

[1] In the "Letters of Queen Victoria" published by the command of King Edward since the above was written, the Queen in describing a visit paid to Osborne by the King of Holland, says that he commented much upon her gaiety of spirits, remarking that when he had seen her as a young girl at Kensington, before her accession, she had appeared crushed and "kept under."

new sovereign of her uncle's demise and her own accession. Queen Adelaide, despite her grief, begged the archbishop to accompany the Lord Chamberlain in order that he might tell the princess of the king's peaceful end. They set off to Kensington at once on horseback, riding posthaste, and arrived at the palace at five o'clock in the morning. It was a long time before they could rouse the porter, and when he responded to their repeated knocking he refused them admittance. However, they succeeded in impressing the necessity of their entrance upon him, but were even then left in one of the anterooms. Finally, their patience exhausted, they found an attendant and demanded to see the princess. Baroness Lehzen then appeared and said the princess was asleep and could not be disturbed. The Lord Chamberlain's answer, "We are come on business of state to the *Queen* and even her sleep must give way to that," sent the baroness hurrying to the princess's bedroom.

Aroused from her sleep the princess came down the stairs with a shawl thrown over her dressing gown, her hair hanging down her back, her feet thrust hastily into slippers. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chamberlain covered with dust from their ride from Wind-

sor, kneeling at her feet in the dawn of the summer morning, saluted her as queen. She seemed scarcely to realize the importance of the news brought by the kneeling ecclesiastic and courtier, and when they told her of the king's peaceful end, she inquired anxiously after her aunt, Queen Adelaide.

Thus at the supreme moment of her life her first thought was not for herself. She was a queen, but the woman's heart spoke first, going out to the stricken widow who had always been kind to her.

The Duchess of Kent had achieved her task, her daughter was Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, and had nothing now to fear from the Duke of Cumberland. There had been a curious scene in the last year of the king's life between the two brothers at Windsor. It was known that the Duke of Cumberland was urging King William to some unconstitutional action with regard to the Princess Victoria, and that the king was wavering between his feelings of duty toward his niece and the effect of his brother's influence. One night after dinner, it is said, that the Duke of Cumberland in the presence of the suite rose and proposed a toast, "The King's health! God save the King!" The toast was drunk. Then the duke asked the

king if he might propose another toast. The king gave his consent. "The King's heir," cried the duke, "and God bless *him*!"

The assembly was stupefied, the king was completely overwhelmed. There was a painful silence, then jumping to his feet the king cried, "The King's heir, God bless *her*!" He drank the toast, threw his glass over his shoulder, and speaking directly to his brother said, "My crown came with a lass,[1] and my crown will go to a lass."

The Duke of Cumberland did not drink the toast and left the room; the king sent him a message, saying that he did not wish to see him again, and the duke departed from the castle the following morning. He used to talk wildly about gaining the army over to his side, and on one occasion William IV is said to have been seriously alarmed and to have called upon the Duke of Wellington, the commander in chief, to take necessary precautions.

King William's death made the Duke of Cumberland King of Hanover, and he left England to the outspoken relief not only of the royal family but of the whole nation. King William once said that the name of Cumberland had always

[1] The Electress Sophia of Hanover, granddaughter of James I and mother of George I.

been hated in England, and "Ernest is not going the way to make it any less hated."

A new era began for England from the day Queen Victoria ascended the throne, the conditions of which were based upon the queen's true womanliness. Because of her womanliness the throne received a significance in the eyes of the people it had never possessed under her predecessors.

She herself used to say that her childhood had been "dull," but whatever mistakes the Duchess of Kent may have made after the accession of William IV, those early years of seclusion, with their simplicity of daily routine, left an indelible impression upon the queen's character and molded her after-life not only as queen, but as a wife, a mother, and a friend. As some one has said of her, "She was magnificently honest to the end of her life." This was a trait she inherited from her father. Oddly enough there are two authentic stories of father and daughter which are practically replicas one of the other. The Duke of Kent when a boy had deliberately broken a valuable ornament. He was told that his naughtiness made both himself and his tutor unhappy. "No," was the answer, "*you* may be sorry, but honestly *I* am not." Queen Victoria, when quite a child, was told by her mother,

"When you are naughty, you make both *me* and *yourself* unhappy." "No, mamma," was the reply, "not *me*, not *myself*, but *you*."

The rooms in Kensington Palace where Queen Victoria lived as a child are now open to the public. Her bedroom and nursery faced the Round Pond with an uninterrupted view over Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park. The bedroom had chairs of white wood with cane backs painted in green and white, the cushions being of ivory Chinese silk embroidered with green leaves. In the room where the princess was born there is a magnificent suite of gold and crimson Empire furniture which formerly stood in the Duchess of Kent's drawing-room. Some of the queen's toys are also kept in the rooms, carefully preserved in a glass case. There is a yellow and black chariot with a crown painted on the panels; a little loom for weaving; and four curious Chinese dolls sitting facing each other under a glass globe, while a mechanical doll stands waiting to be wound up to dance its *pas de fascination* down an alley of trees that never had their like upon any spot on the earth. A two-roomed doll's house rouses contempt in the breast of the modern child by its simplicity. There is a set of tiny bibs, neatly hemmed, and with the initials of each doll

worked upon them, the work of the little princess herself; a German village cut out of solid blocks of wood; a set of battledores and wooden dumb-bells; an Indian prince, without a head, on a prancing horse; everything is simple, and, with the exception of the mechanical doll, and a doll's couch, once covered with white satin and silver filigree, they might be the toys of any middle-class child of the period.

Queen Victoria never returned to Kensington Palace after she ascended the throne, and of all the places in which she lived in her childhood, Claremont was the only one for which she ever had any affection.

In one respect the Duchess of Kent's training had a serious weakness. She made the queen too dependent, and when her accession suddenly changed this dependence to sovereign power the strain of willfulness in her character became at once apparent in her private as well as her public affairs. Her character was still unformed, and as we shall see it was directly to her mother that she owed the husband who completed the task the mother had begun "friendless and alone."

CHAPTER IV

LORD MELBOURNE

HE two and a half years that elapsed between the queen's accession and her marriage may be regarded as an interregnum in her life. She herself described this period as "the least sensible and satisfactory time in her whole life. . . . That life of constant amusement, flattery, excitement, and mere politics had a bad effect (as it must have on anyone) on her naturally simple and serious nature," and she added, "I can never be sufficiently thankful that I passed safely through those two years to my marriage. Then I was in a safe haven, and there I remained for twenty years."

When a girl of eighteen is suddenly emancipated from a strict training, and finds that she is the person of the highest importance in the country, it is not surprising that her natural spirits should express themselves. The queen was naturally high-spirited and her first action

was to free herself from the tutelage of her mother. The Duchess of Kent continued to live with the queen either at Buckingham Palace or at Windsor, but she occupied separate apartments, and for the first time in her life the queen slept alone. The duchess bitterly resented the fact that her daughter never consulted her upon public affairs and that she was entirely excluded from matters political. It was the same with Baroness Lehzen. She had for some time acted as the Princess Victoria's secretary in her private affairs; she continued the same work when the princess became queen. Private letters and matters of state were two entirely separate matters, and when it was a question of the state the queen entirely dissociated herself from Victoria, the daughter, and the Princess Victoria, the pupil. In time both the duchess and the baroness realized the wisdom of this division, as it were, of one individuality into two, but at the outset the duchess complained bitterly.

The young queen showed her determination in other directions. The ladies and gentlemen of her household were chosen for her by Lord Melbourne, who was the Prime Minister, and leader of the Whig party. She had never liked Sir John Conroy, her father's equerry, and the

comptroller of the Duchess of Kent's household for so many years, and, striking his name from the list, desired that he should retire from her service, giving him a pension of £3,000 a year. The reason of her dislike for Sir John Conroy was never known, although gossip of the period hinted that Baroness Lehzen had poisoned her mind against him.

There was no doubt as to the baroness's position in the minds of those about the queen, and the position was so clearly indicated that it was obvious even to her Majesty's visitors, one of whom, Sir Charles Murray, wrote in the autumn of 1837: "At dinner I had a very interesting conversation with Baroness Lehzen who has been for many years her Majesty's governess. I know of nothing more creditable to herself, or to her illustrious pupil, than the fact that one of the first acts of her reign was to secure the Baroness a situation about her own person. The Queen treats her with the most kind and affectionate confidence. I am told that all the Queen's private correspondence was carefully copied by the Baroness before and since coming to the throne, and that since her Majesty's accession she has not shown her one letter of Cabinet or State documents, nor has she spoken to her, nor to any woman, about or upon party or political

questions. As Queen she reserves all her confidences for her official advisers, while as a woman she is as frank, gay, and unreserved as when she was a young girl. I had a long conversation with her on the 24th, while riding, chiefly on the subject of modern languages. Her conversation is very agreeable. Both her ideas and her language are natural and original, while there is latent independence of mind. Her strength of judgment is discernible through the feminine gentleness of tone in which her voice is pitched. Every day that I have passed here has increased my admiration for the excellent judgment shown by Madame Lehzen in her education, and for the amiable and grateful feeling evinced by the Queen toward her governess. It does the highest honor to both."

Amidst all the excitement of her new duties, into the learning of which she threw herself with feverish zeal, the young queen took the keenest delight in arranging her domestic affairs. The same housewifely spirit that expressed itself as a child in her desire to clean all Queen Adelaide's windows, now found ample scope at Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace. She arranged every detail of the daily life of the court; she entertained largely, and, at Windsor, liked nothing better than to show her visitors all

over the castle, including the kitchens. Lord Melbourne, the Prime Minister, was her guide and mentor in matters of state and matters political. He spent the whole morning with her, guiding her, and instructing her in the difficult path a sovereign must follow. The afternoons and evenings were given up to gayety. At Windsor the queen rode out every afternoon attended by a cavalcade of thirty people, an imposing spectacle, the ladies, headed by the queen in long, flowing habits, and the gentlemen in brilliant uniforms. There was a large dinner party every evening at which Lord Melbourne sat by the queen's side, and three times a week there was dancing. A vivid contrast to the seclusion of Kensington!

One of the queen's first visitors at Windsor after her accession was her beloved Uncle Leopold, King of the Belgians, and his wife, a daughter of Louis Philippe, King of the French. Sir Charles Murray's account of this visit gives a vivid picture of the charm of the young queen. Sir Charles wrote: "I was presented and kissed hands, after which I joined the cavalcade consisting of twenty-five or thirty equestrians, and we made a promenade about the Great Park for two hours. There was little or no formal ceremony observed as to precedence. The Queen

rode generally in front, accompanied by the Queen of the Belgians, the King, and the Duchess of Kent. And now and then she called up Lord Cowper, Wellington, or Melbourne to ride beside her. Her Majesty's seat on horseback is easy and graceful, and the early habit of command observable in all her movements and gestures is agreeably relieved by the gentle tone of voice and the natural playfulness with which she addresses her relatives and the ladies about her. I never saw a more quick or observant eye. In the course of the ride it glanced occasionally over every individual of the party, and I am sure that neither absence nor impropriety of any kind could escape detection. At half-past seven the guests and the household again met her Majesty in the corridor, and we proceeded to dinner, the arrangements for which were handsome and without parade. The ladies retired to the drawing-rooms, and we followed in a quarter of an hour. The band was in attendance at and after dinner, and played some excellent music, the chief of which was by Rossini and Bellini. During the evening her Majesty conversed with her principal guests. She also played two games of draughts with the Queen of the Belgians, both of which she gained. There was a whist table at which were the Duchess of Kent, the King of

the Belgians, the Duke of Wellington and Lilford."

The queen's manner to King Leopold Sir Charles describes as being "most respectful and affectionate. Indeed, her manner to everyone about her is perfectly winning and appropriate, and her countenance lights up with the most agreeable and intelligent expression possible."

The queen adored children, and they were nearly always to be found among her visitors in those two years before her marriage. After her afternoon ride she would play games with them, and then would play at battledore and shuttlecock with her ladies or visitors. A lady of the court gives an amusing instance of two little boys in the neighborhood of Windsor being sent for by the queen one wet afternoon in 1838.

"The Queen had them to play in the corridor Saturday, and I quite enjoyed it. They had neither nurse nor mamma with them and were most funny and good—throwing great balls at us, and then screaming: 'Queen, look, I have killed the lady!' They first declined playing at ball. 'I don't think it right in a palace,' said one, 'I might hurt something.'"

The Duchess of Kent's connection with so many German reigning families, and the constant correspondence she maintained with her

own family of Saxe-Coburg, naturally gave the young queen an especial interest in her German relatives. They were her constant visitors after she ascended the throne, and she had not been queen for a month when she conferred the Order of the Garter (the highest distinction in England) upon her half brother the Prince of Leiningen. The same order was conferred upon her mother's brother, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, in the following year. She was equally attentive to all her English relatives, and especially to Queen Adelaide, whose kindness and solicitude in her childhood she never forgot. Her consideration for her uncles and aunts was most touching; the glamour and magnificence of her position never overshadowed the promptings of her heart. In the "Life and Letters of Adam Sedgwick" we read that in July, 1837, the Duke of Sussex, who was president of the Royal Society, had to introduce a deputation of the fellows to the queen in order that they might present their statutes, and that she might sign them as sovereign. "She received the Duke of Sussex," says Sedgwick, "without any of the formality of a court, and seemed only to remember that he was her uncle. He offered to bend his knee and kiss her hand (which is the regular form on such occasions), but she immediately stopped him, put her arm

round his neck, and kissed his cheek." It was a charming expression of her regard for the old duke, whom she knew better than the other members of her father's family, as he occupied a suite of rooms at Kensington Palace below those of the Duchess of Kent. The same regard is echoed in the following letter:

"BUCKINGHAM PALACE, December 29, 1837.

"MY DEAR UNCLE:

"I grieve much to see by your kind letter which I got yesterday that you are still on crutches, and suffering. Under these circumstances fearing that you might still be unable to leave the house at the end of this week, I wish to know if Tuesday 12th, would suit you to drive with me. I trust then, dear Uncle, that I shall find you quite recovered.

"Believe me always, my dear uncle,

"Your affectionate niece,

"VICTORIA R."

Despite her interest in the duties of her position and her enjoyment of the unaccustomed liberty of action, the queen's situation was not one which a young girl could occupy without making mistakes; and in those early days the queen, her good qualities of heart and head notwithstanding, was both imperious and willful.

It is no part of this study of Queen Victoria to enter into the politics of her reign, but as the two grave mistakes in the first years of her rule were political mistakes on the part of the sovereign, and as they taught the woman a lesson she never forgot, some explanation of the political situation is necessary.

When the queen ascended the throne the Liberals, then called Whigs, were in power with Lord Melbourne as Prime Minister. At the general election—which according to the law of England must take place within six months of the death of a sovereign—in 1837, the Whigs again held the majority of seats, and Lord Melbourne again became Prime Minister. The question immediately arose as to the appointment of a political private secretary to the queen. With a sovereign still in her teens there was the danger of anyone occupying so confidential a position gaining undue influence. Lord Melbourne solved the difficulty by taking over the duties himself, and for the first ten years of the reign was with the queen constantly. The Duke of Kent had been a Whig. William IV was a Tory (or Conservative as the party is called to-day), and the Duchess of Kent, as much to annoy her brother-in-law as from any personal predilection, had openly allied herself with the Whigs during

one of the many quarrels between King William and herself. Thus the queen had been brought up in a Whig atmosphere; it was the only aspect of politics that had been presented to her. Circumstances with which she herself had no concern made the Whig Prime Minister her political tutor, but she made a serious mistake when she openly avowed her preference for the Whigs over the Tories. The monarchy of England being constitutional, the sovereign—at least publicly—is of neither political party, and therefore when the blaze of enthusiasm which spread through the country upon her accession had died down, and she was found to be openly allied with the Whigs, there was a strong revulsion of feeling, Sir Robert Peel, the Tory leader, going so far as to say, in the House of Commons, that "the monarchy was endangered by the vigor with which she was ruled by Lord Melbourne, the chief of one political party." The question was one most calculated to do the young queen harm with the people. Her attitude enraged the Tories, who, while they still respected her youth, made public comments upon Lord Melbourne which reflected upon her and must have been extremely galling to one of her sensibility.

Lord Melbourne by nature was a jovial, fox-hunting squire, clever, but indolent, whom acci-

dent rather than ambition had made Prime Minister of England. In his "Life" of the queen the Duke of Argyll says that Melbourne "had become more careless with age, and a happy indolence led him rather to consult his comfort in taking the broadest roads than to listen to his vigorous understanding, hinting at the narrow path of difficulty. 'Can't you leave it alone?' was supposed to express his frame of mind whenever a trouble presented itself to be fought by his more combative colleagues. But he had great loyalty of nature, and a capacity which made his judgment sure." His devotion to the queen was whole-hearted and sincere. He treated her with a fatherliness and courtesy that instantly excited her confidence and respect. He disliked society, and especially the stiffness and etiquette of the court, but to the amazement of his friends he played the part of a perfect courtier for two years, and was constantly in attendance.

Charles Greville gives a vivid picture of the position of the queen and Lord Melbourne, as it appeared to the court: "George Villiers, who came from Windsor on Monday, told me that he had been extremely struck with Lord Melbourne's manner to the Queen, and hers to him —his so parental and anxious but always so re-

spectful and deferential, hers indicative of such entire confidence and such pleasure in his society. She is constantly talking to him, let who will be there. He always sits next to her at dinner, evidently by arrangement, for he always takes in the lady in waiting, which necessarily places him next to her, the etiquette being that the lady in waiting sits next but one to the Queen. It is not unnatural, and to him it is peculiarly interesting. I have no doubt he is passionately fond of her as he might be of his own daughter, if he had one, and the more because he is a man with a capacity for loving without having anything in the world to love. It has become his providence to educate, instruct, and form the most interesting mind and character in the world. No occupation was ever more engrossing, or involved greater responsibility. I have no doubt Melbourne is both equal to and worthy of the task, and that it is fortunate that she has fallen into his hands, and that he discharges this great duty wisely, honorably, conscientiously.

"There are, however, or rather may be hereafter, inconveniences in the establishment of such an intimacy and in a connection of so close and affectionate a nature between a young Queen and her Minister, for whenever the Government, which hangs by a thread, shall be broken up, the

parting will be painful, and their subsequent relations will not be without embarrassment to themselves, nor fail to be the cause of jealousy in others. It is a great proof of the discretion and purity of his conduct that he is admired, respected, and liked by all the court."

Croker, a Tory writer who was notorious in his time for the venom of his articles, put into print all that Sir Robert Peel had not dared to say in Parliament: "They send all manner of things in the various official boxes for signature, and she, not knowing yet what is substance and what is form, reads all. It is suspected that this is done to give her disgust of her business. I do not suspect any such deep design, but certainly the proper way would be that once or twice a week one of the Secretaries of State should attend with all the papers that require her signature and explain what is important and what not. Lord Melbourne sees her every day for a couple of hours, and his situation is certainly the most dictatorial, the most despotic, that the world has ever seen. Wolsey and Walpole were in strait waistcoats compared with him. His temper and influence lead him to no great abuse of this enormous influence, nor would his political influence out of the palace permit him to do anything essentially wrong in it. But as be-

tween him and the sovereign, he is a perfect *Maire du Palais.*"

The Tories, indignant at the queen's openly expressed Whiggism—an error of judgment that came solely from her youth and natural candor — naturally exaggerated the situation. Politics do not spare even a young girl, and as the Whigs made all possible capital out of the queen's sympathy with their party, so the Tories, by spreading abroad the tales of Lord Melbourne's influence and machinations, endeavored to cast discredit upon their opponents in order that they themselves might reap the advantage. Thus, in her ignorance, the queen had made herself the tool of one party and the butt of the other. This was her first mistake, and she did not realize its full import until two years later.

CHAPTER V

THE CORONATION

LL England looked forward to the coronation of the young queen, and the Parliament, actuated by the highest patriotic motives, decided to make the ceremony one of particular impressiveness, voting the large sum of £200,000 for the expenses.

The occasion caused no less interest in Europe, and the continental sovereigns, without exception, chose the greatest of their subjects as their representatives at the ceremony. It is not etiquette for a monarch to attend the coronation of another monarch unless he is a close relative. The Duke of Saxe-Coburg, the queen's uncle, was the only reigning sovereign present at the queen's coronation, and he attended by her express and personal invitation. King Louis Philippe of France sent Marshal Soult—the veteran who had fought against the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular War, where he lost a

leg, and at the Battle of Waterloo—as his representative. Each of the foreign representatives was accompanied by a brilliant suite specially chosen from the highest ranks of the aristocracy of their various countries. The crowning of a young girl as ruler of a great people roused the chivalrous instinct of Europe. Magnificence was piled upon magnificence. Huge sums were given to the various representatives for their expenses, Marshal Soult being allowed £1,600 ($8,000) for one week's rent of a house in London, while the gems upon the national dress of the Hungarian noblemen who were attached to the suite of Prince Schwarzenburg (the representative of the Emperor of Austria) were so valuable that great difficulty was found in insuring them during the journey to and from England.

A writer has happily described the queen's coronation as "a festival of hope," and such it was. The English were weary of the rule of the four Georges. The first and second were openly German in their lives and their sentiments, and both with difficulty were made to realize the limitations of a constitutional sovereign. The third George won the respect of his subjects by the uprightness of his life, but the throne lost its dignity under his rule and that of the bourgeois-minded Queen Charlotte.

George III's favorite dish was roast mutton with suet pudding, and there was the same savor about his mental outlook and his private life. His people called him "Farmer George" half contemptuously, half affectionately, but they bitterly resented the fact that while he drew an enormous revenue from the country he kept no proper state of monarchy, and came to the country not only for provision for each of his many sons, but also for the payment of the Prince Regent's debts. George IV in his early years, by his charm of manner and good looks, had won all hearts, but his wild extravagance, the vulgarity of his excesses and intrigues caused him to be despised as regent. As sovereign he was detested because of his treatment of his unfortunate, if tactless wife, Queen Caroline. William IV did his duty as king according to his lights, but it was without dignity. He never forgot the quarter-deck; he was liked, but never respected.

Even in those days when the respect for birth placed the sons of the royal family on such an exalted plane that their moral failings were regarded as mere peccadillos, strong feeling was roused when William IV ennobled the illegitimate sons and daughters born to him during a long *liaison* with Mrs. Jordan, the actress. The

mother he was obliged to send away when he married his wife, for reasons of state; and it says much for Queen Adelaide's sweetness of nature that she extended the greatest kindness to his children, as also did Queen Victoria. King William was on an infinitely higher moral standing than his brothers George IV, the Duke of York, and the Duke of Cumberland. He had been faithful to Mrs. Jordan for many years, and would have been faithful until his death if unexpected circumstances had not placed him in direct succession to the throne. But Mrs. Jordan was not his legal wife, and the presence of her children at his court called for the condonation by his people of an irregular union. And when a nation is called upon to condone a fault of its monarch, it no longer respects that monarch. In Southern countries this statement would not apply, but in England, where the idea that the sovereign represents all that is highest and noblest in human nature is inbred in the people, it is the first standard by which the occupant of the throne is judged.

Little wonder then that the nation, weary of the scandals and quarrels which had succeeded one another almost without pause in the royal family since the sons of George III attained manhood, regarded the coming of the queen to

the throne as a presage of hope, and there was something more than the expression of loyalty, with which the English greet their sovereigns when they appear in public, in the cries and cheers which welcomed the young queen as the great stage coach, with its eight cream horses in their crimson trappings, passed from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey; they were cries of joy and hope. Four hundred thousand people had come to London for the coronation, a huge number for those times, and thousands had passed the night in the streets, less from lack of accommodation than from eagerness to secure good positions along the route of the procession.

The entrance into Westminster Abbey, which had been filled with galleries, presented a magnificent spectacle. The jewels of the peeresses and of the foreign envoys—Prince Schwarzenburg, the Austrian representative, was described by a lady present as looking "as though he had been snowed upon with pearls, and had also been caught out in a rain of pearls and had come in dripping"—flashed amidst a sea of glittering uniforms with the rich crimson of the peers, and peeresses' robes for background. Ten thousand people rose to their feet as the clergy, heralding the procession, entered the aisle. They were followed by heralds and officers of the queen's

household, prelates, and officers of state. Then came the queen's aunt, the Duchess of Cambridge, in a purple robe, her train held by a lady and her coronet borne before her on a cushion. The Duchess of Kent followed (it will be observed that the duchess was not given any special precedence as the queen's mother, only that due to her husband's birth). Part of the regalia, each piece borne by a nobleman of high rank, preceded the Dukes of Cambridge and Sussex in their robes of state as royal princes. After the passage of the High Constable of Ireland (the Duke of Leinster), the High Constable of Scotland (the Earl of Erroll), the Earl Marshal of England (the Duke of Norfolk), and the Lord High Constable of England (the Duke of Wellington), came the noblemen and bishops bearing the rest of the regalia, the sword of state, the scepter with the dove, St. Edward's crown, the orb, the patina, the chalice, and the Bible. These immediately preceded the queen. An expectant hush fell over the vast assembly as she entered, a slim, tiny figure, a circlet of diamonds on her fair hair. Then the choir burst forth into the anthem, "I was glad when they said unto Me, Let us go into the House of the Lord," and to its ringing strains the queen proceeded to the altar.

The Duchess of Cleveland, who as Lady Wilhelmina Stanhope was one of the eight ladies, the daughters of earls, marquises, and dukes, who bore the queen's train, wrote in her recollections: "The Queen looked very well, and was perfectly composed. She wore a circlet of splendid diamonds, and was dressed in gold tissue, over which was fastened a crimson velvet mantle, bordered with gold lace and lined with ermine, with a long ermine cape, which very ponderous appendages we were to support. As train bearers we stood according to our rank, as follows: Lady Caroline Lennox and Lady Adelaide Paget; Lady Mary Talbot and Lady Fanny Cowper; Lady Anne FitzWilliam and myself; Lady Louisa Jenkinson, and last, not least, Lady Mary Grimston. We were all dressed alike in white and silver. The effect was not, I think, brilliant enough in so dazzling an assembly, and our little trains were serious annoyances, for it was impossible to avoid treading upon them. We ought never to have had them; and there certainly should have been some previous rehearsing, for we carried the Queen's train very jerkily and badly, never keeping step properly; and it must have been very difficult for her to walk as she did, evenly and steadily and with much grace and dignity, the whole length of the abbey. The

abbey itself was a beautiful *coup d'œil*, as we marched up amidst thunders of applause, and handkerchiefs and scarves waving everywhere. The Queen acknowledged her reception very graciously. I think her heart fluttered a little as we reached the throne; at least, the color mounted to her cheeks, brow, and even neck, and her breath came quickly. However, the slight emotion she showed was very transient, and she stood perfectly motionless while the archbishop, in an almost inaudible voice, proclaimed her our undoubted sovereign and liege lady."

This ceremony was more impressive than would be gathered from the Duchess of Cleveland's account. It was called "The Recognition." The queen and the Archbishop of Canterbury standing side by side turned to the four quarters of the compass, and each time the archbishop called out: "Sirs, I here present unto you Queen Victoria, the undoubted Queen of this realm; wherefore, all you who are come this day to do your homage, are you willing to do the same?" Each time the answer from the people was "God save Queen Victoria."

Then followed the coronation service, into the lengthy details of which it is not necessary to enter, save that in giving the solemn oaths de-

manded of her the queen spoke clearly, yet with a faint tremulousness in her voice which showed she realized the gravity of her undertaking.

The ceremony was badly managed. There had been no proper rehearsal; the queen had been left in complete ignorance as to what she should do at various points of the service, and at one solemn moment she was obliged to whisper to Lord John Thynne, the sub-dean of Westminster, "Pray tell me what I am to do, for they (meaning the clergy) don't know." But Lord John could be of little assistance to her. She suffered agonies of nervousness, but gave no sign. Benjamin Disraeli (afterwards Earl of Beaconsfield and her most devoted servant), in describing the coronation in a letter to his sister, said: "The Queen performed her part with great grace and completeness, which cannot in general be said of the other performers; they were always in doubt as to what came next, and you saw the want of rehearsal."

While she was being invested with the various insignia, the archbishop unexpectedly placed the orb in her hand before he had given the exhortation which preceded each investment. It was so heavy she could hardly hold it. Immediately afterwards she was invested with the ruby ring. It had been made for her little finger, but the

archbishop placed it on her fourth finger, and, endeavoring to force it over the knuckle, caused her such pain that she nearly cried out. But the spectators saw no sign of her discomfort. From the beginning to the end of the ceremony there was in her manner an exquisite "blending of girlishness and serene dignity."

The queen and her mother had many bitter enemies among the Tory aristocracy, but in the abbey she won all hearts. As robed in the imperial mantle of cloth of gold, she knelt before the archbishop to be crowned, a ray of sunlight fell upon her head. The Duchess of Kent, unable to restrain her feelings, burst into tears; and when the diadem, formed of loops of gold, encrusted with diamonds and sapphires over a cap of blue velvet, with its great Maltese cross of brilliants at the top, and a circlet studded with pearls, rubies, sapphires, and diamonds, was placed upon her head, there was an outburst of love and loyalty. When the sovereign is crowned, the peers and peeresses at the same time place their coronets upon their heads. It is the most brilliant and thrilling moment of the ceremony, but on this occasion it passed from mere brilliance. The woman appealed to the great assemblage, her bravery, her dignity during an ordeal of five hours touched every heart,

From the portrait of the Queen in her coronation robes by Winterhalter, in the Throne Room of Windsor Castle.

and her bitterest enemies joined in the continual cries of "God save the Queen."

After the actual coronation the queen was led to a throne in the center of the church to receive the homage of the peers. The royal princes ascended the steps of the throne, and taking off their coronets knelt at the queen's feet while they said the words of homage. Then, rising, they touched the crown upon the queen's head and kissed her upon the left cheek. The words of homage were: "I do become your liege man of life and limb, and of earthly worship and faith, and truth I will bear unto you to live and die against all manner of folk, so help me God."

Seventeen dukes next performed homage, then twenty-one marquises, ninety-three earls, nineteen viscounts, and ninety-one barons, but only the royal princes kissed the queen; the peers kissed her hand. A touching instance of the queen's kindness of heart occurred during this ceremony. Lord Rolle, who was eighty years old and very feeble, fell down the steps of the throne as he was about to do his homage. The queen half rose from her seat, and when after a pause the aged peer had recovered and again came to the foot of the throne, she said, "May I not get up and meet him?" and descended two

or three steps to save him the exertion which was clearly beyond his strength. The kindliness and naturalness of the action created a profound impression. By the time the homage was over, the queen was suffering from a severe headache caused by the crown being "very unceremoniously *knocked* by most of the peers—one actually clutched hold of it," when they touched it before kissing her hand.

The emblems of sovereignty were then taken from her, and she received the sacrament kneeling at the altar "like a fair young devotee in the costume of the Middle Ages." This ended the service of the coronation, and the crown being again placed on her head and the scepter in her hand, she walked in procession to the door of the abbey where the state coach awaited her, and returned to Buckingham Palace amidst the delirious enthusiasm of the dense crowds.

An onlooker wrote: "When she returned, looking pale and tremulous, crowned, and holding her scepter in a manner and attitude which said, 'I have it, and none shall wrest it from me,' even Carlyle, who was standing near me, uttered with emotion a blessing on her head," and after his blessing the great writer added, "Poor little Queen! She is at an age at which a girl can hardly be entrusted to choose a bonnet

for herself, yet a task is laid upon her from which an archangel might shrink."

The queen fully realized the magnitude of the responsibility she had that day undertaken in the sight of God and her people, yet such was her natural simplicity and girlishness that on returning to the palace she quickly rid herself of her gorgeous panoply of state so that she might give her favorite dog a bath. Nothing could have been more stately and earnest than her bearing in the abbey; indeed, one of the spectators said that the queen seemed the only person who realized the actual import of the various ceremonies, yet within an hour of her return after having passed through serried lines of cheering subjects, she had put aside the Queen and was the young girl devoted to her pets. In the evening, when she entertained one hundred of her relatives at dinner at the palace, she was the queen again. This power of dissociating her royal state from her private life was one of the great charms of Queen Victoria's character; the woman's heart often dictated to the sovereign, but the sovereignty never chilled the woman's heart.

CHAPTER VI

A COURT SCANDAL

HE patriotic enthusiasm aroused throughout the country by the queen's coronation obscured the political issues created by her open espousal of the cause of the Whig party. But when the excitement had died down and the daily life of the nation resumed its normal course, the Tory rancor against the queen burst out with redoubled violence. Her bearing at her coronation had inspired the respect of her worst enemies among the Tories, and in the latter half of 1838 there were none of the bitter tirades in the Conservative newspapers which for a year previously had been almost continuous. Veiled references to the position of Lord Melbourne appeared occasionally, but the earlier venom and bitter criticism were absent. The Tory fires of resentment, however, were only smoldering, and in January, 1839, they burst into a distressing flame. Suddenly, without warning, the queen

was faced with a situation so delicate and serious that it is difficult to understand how those about her, let their suspicions have been what they might, could have ever hinted at their existence to a young, innocent girl.

Lady Flora Hastings, the daughter of the Marquis of Hastings, was one of the Duchess of Kent's ladies. In January, 1839, her appearance aroused a grave suspicion against her character in the minds of some of the members of the queen's suite. The queen and the Duchess of Kent were informed of these suspicions, but refused to believe them to be true. Lady Tavistock, however, one of the ladies of the queen's bedchamber, laid the matter before Lord Melbourne, and he, fearing for the credit of the young queen and her court, suggested that Lady Flora should be examined by the queen's doctor, Sir James Clark. The queen, acting upon the urgent advice of Melbourne, agreed; the examination was made, and a formal certificate drawn up which gave the lie direct to all the cruel stories of the court against the unhappy lady.

Such a scandal could not remain secret, for Lady Flora's family were naturally outraged by the insult. Her mother wrote to the queen imploring her to make reparation and to dismiss the doctor; her brother was given an interview

by the queen, but the letters remained unanswered, and the interview brought no definite statement. Lord Melbourne wrote to Lady Hastings, saying "that the Queen had seized the earliest opportunity of personally acknowledging to Lady Flora the unhappy error, and that it was not intended to take any other steps."

Lady Flora herself wrote to her uncle: "I am sure the Queen does not understand what they betrayed her into. She has endeavored to show her regret by her civility to me, and expressed it handsomely with tears in her eyes." The Hastings family, however, would accept no private expressions of regret; they considered that not only Lady Flora, but the whole house of Hastings, had been publicly insulted, and that the only possible amend was a public apology.

Still the queen maintained silence, and the Marchioness of Hastings, failing to obtain the reparation she demanded, published the whole of the correspondence between herself, her Majesty, and Lord Melbourne in the public press. The writer is within the bounds of fact when he says that in the present day no newspaper in the kingdom, with the exception of one or two ultra-Radical and Socialistic organs, would publish private letters dealing purely with a matter of

the court. This respect was created by Queen Victoria; but in 1839 the tradition of disrespect for the throne, bred by the scandals of George III's family, was so strong that one London newspaper, in commenting upon the case, described Lady Flora as the "victim of a depraved court." The doctor, Sir James Clark, was the principal object of Lady Hastings's attack. He defended himself by writing long explanations to the newspapers which only added fuel to the scandal. The Hastings family were Tories, and political capital was at once made of the distressing incident. Lady Flora, however, remained at court for seven months after the outburst, a circumstance which was in itself sufficient proof that she accepted the queen's expression of regret. Her family and the Tory party insisted on a public apology, and this the queen was advised would be against etiquette; the sovereign could not admit that she had made a mistake, nor could the sovereign make public apology. Public opinion was wholly against the queen, and when Lady Flora died in July of enlargement of the liver, she was openly accused of having hastened her death.

It was a terrible position for a girl of twenty. Lord Melbourne was clearly the person upon whom the public blame should have fallen, but

although it was known that the queen had acted upon his advice, and despite the fact that Lady Flora had died at Buckingham Palace, still in the service of the Duchess of Kent, several months after the accusation was made, and that the queen had countermanded a banquet she was giving directly she heard the unfortunate lady was dying, a thrill of horror and disgust ran through society.

The Hastings family never forgot this tragic episode, nor forgave the queen for her silence. They appeared no longer at court, or at any function at which the queen was present; and if by chance they passed her driving in the Park or in the streets, neither the men nor the women made any salutation. The first time that Lady Hastings, Lady Flora's mother, passed the queen in Hyde Park after her daughter's death, and stared at her coldly without any sign of recognition, the queen, it is said, flushed deeply and her eyes filled with tears. She suffered acutely. Her high spirits deserted her, and she grew pale and thin. Her radiant court, which had been the abode of all the charms and all the graces, was sadly smirched; the newspapers did not even respect her own innocence.

In later life the queen, by reason of her knowledge of the world, saw the mistake she had made

in assenting to Lord Melbourne's suggestion of the medical examination. A young girl would naturally follow the advice of older people in so delicate a situation, but it was a matter which should never have concerned Lord Melbourne, and one which should have been settled by the queen and the Duchess of Kent, or by the Duchess of Kent alone. But the duchess, engrossed by the great future of her daughter and imbued by the passionate desire to train her to fill that position worthily, like many excellent mothers in less exalted stations, had overlooked the rapid growth of her child's character after her sixteenth year. There was much in the duchess's attitude, especially in public, in the two years preceding her accession to the throne that was calculated to rouse resentment in her daughter's mind. To the credit of the queen, it must be said this resentment was never expressed, but, as it has been already pointed out, she made an unmistakable distinction between the queen and the daughter from the day of her accession. Unfortunately, both she and Lord Melbourne regarded the question of Lady Flora Hastings's character as a matter affecting the sovereign, and not the daughter, which it clearly did, seeing that that misjudged lady was in her mother's service.

Before the queen had recovered from the shock of this distressing episode, she found herself faced by her first Cabinet crisis.

In the last reign the Whig party had passed laws for the suppression of slavery in the British colonies. They were therefore bound in honor to carry out the application of these laws when returned to power by the general election rendered necessary by the queen's accession. These anti-slavery laws were met with strenuous opposition, but nowhere more bitterly than in Jamaica, where all the planters were slave owners. Finally, the planters took up arms, and Lord Melbourne was compelled to ask Parliament to suspend the constitution of the colony until the rebellion was at an end. These laws had been strongly opposed by the Tories as being a Whig attack on vested interests.

The queen's open attachment to the Whigs, added to the scandal and misrepresentations of the Hastings affair, now took effect. Lord Melbourne's proposal for the suspension of the constitution of the island of Jamaica was passed by the House of Commons by a majority of only five votes. Many of the older Whig members voted against their leader because they felt that the domination of the young sovereign by one po-

litical party should cease; the Tory members voted against the proposal because it came from the Whig Prime Minister. Any project Lord Melbourne had laid before the House at this moment would have met the same fate, since he was losing the confidence of his own party. With so narrow a majority he, therefore, had no alternative but to send his resignation and those of his cabinet to the queen. To her it was a catastrophe for which she was wholly unprepared, and when Lord John Russell told her the news she wept bitterly, dining alone in her room afterwards, and seeing none of the court the whole evening. She was in a most difficult position, and did not seek to conceal her grief and distress. Lord Melbourne, no longer being Prime Minister, could give her no advice, and this her good sense led her instantly to recognize, for she did not seek it. She realized that she must face the Tories, whom she considered as her enemies, alone, and without his support. Lord Melbourne was quite within the rights of his position to suggest to the queen that she should consult the Duke of Wellington. She instantly sent for him, and when he came to her on the morning after the resignation of the ministry he found her quite calm and self-possessed, and was " exceeding pleased with her behavior and her frank-

ness." The woman who had wept on the previous day had given place to the sovereign. During this interview the queen probably inferred that she wished the duke to undertake the task of forming a new ministry, for he pleaded his age and deafness, and suggested that, as her Prime Minister ought to be in the House of Commons, she should send for Sir Robert Peel, the leader of the Tory party.

"Will you desire him to come to me?" the queen asked. She disliked Sir Robert, and, womanlike, she wished if possible to avoid sending him a direct summons.

The duke assured her of his devotion and readiness to perform any service, but hinted with blunt kindliness that "under the circumstances it would be better that she should write to him herself."

After a moment's reflection the queen agreed, but begged that the duke would go to Sir Robert and inform him that she would write. Her quickness of perception showed her that a personal command from herself was necessary, but at the same time she wished to deprive her summons of any appearance of spontaneity because of her dislike of the Tories. By sending the greatest man in England as a messenger, the queen indicated that she was acting by his ad-

vice, not upon her own wishes—an attitude which was entirely unconstitutional.

The duke informed Sir Robert Peel that the queen would write to him; the letter was duly written, and Sir Robert in full court dress, as etiquette demanded, repaired to the palace. The queen received him with courtesy and dignity, and without any trace of the personal disfavor with which she regarded him. She gave him the necessary commands to form a new government, and the interview was over, Peel being "perfectly satisfied" with his reception.

The Tories were triumphant. They had been too many years out of office, and the queen's expressed sympathy for the Whigs had engendered such party rancor and envy, that it was not to be expected they should take their victory calmly. Their triumph, however, was of short duration. A rumor ran through the world of politics and society that a difficulty had arisen between the young monarch and Sir Robert Peel, and in a few days the country was ringing with the story of what was called "The Bedchamber Crisis."

It is an established custom in England that the appointments of high officials at the court of the sovereign are made, subject to the approval of the monarch, by the political party in power.

The Lord Chamberlain, the Master of the Horse, the Lord Steward, the lords in waiting, etc., only hold their office during the time the party to which they belong is holding the reins of government. When the queen ascended the throne and her household was formed, Lord Melbourne chose her ladies—the Mistress of the Robes, her maids of honor, her Ladies of the Bedchamber, and her Women of the Bedchamber—exclusively from Whig families, many of them being close relatives of her Whig ministers. His choice excited much adverse comment at the time, and when Sir Robert Peel received the queen's command to form the new government, he suggested that, following the usage by which the high court officials were changed, the queen's Whig ladies should also be replaced by Tory ladies.

Peel was in an awkward situation. The households of queen consorts were never affected by political changes, only those of the monarch, and he therefore had no precedent to guide him with regard to the household of a female sovereign. He naturally argued that if the queen were still surrounded by Whig ladies when the Tories were in power, not only would she be hedged round by active enemies of that party, but that he himself, and future Tory prime min-

isters, would be deprived of the bestowal of posts upon the wives and sisters and daughters of their supporters which it had always been considered a great honor to occupy, and which were regarded as political rewards to their families. His suggestion, it is said, only applied to the ladies occupying the higher positions in her Majesty's court, but when he broached the subject to the queen he was indefinite, and did not say how many of the ladies he proposed to replace. The queen instantly took alarm. She thought that all her ladies were to be taken from her, and quite unjustly believed that Sir Robert wished to deprive her of the services of Baroness Lehzen; therefore, without a moment's hesitation, she declined to accede to the proposal. Peel pointed out that the retention of "ladies whose husbands were his strongest political opponents" would create "an impression that the confidence of the Queen was bestowed on his enemies rather than on himself." The queen repeated her refusal. Then Peel sought the good offices of the Duke of Wellington, but nothing could shake her determination, and when the duke said that, as she was reigning sovereign and not a queen consort, she must regard her "*ladies* in the same light as *lords*," she answered, "No, I have lords besides, and these I give up to you."

Finding himself unable to shake her determination, Peel withdrew, saying that he must consult his friends.

The news of the *impasse* between the queen and Peel speedily reached Lord Melbourne, who hastily summoned a meeting of his colleagues, and when they assembled at nine o'clock in the evening he placed before them a letter written to him by the queen after the interview of the morning. "Do not fear I was not calm and composed," she wrote. "They wanted to deprive me of my ladies, and I suppose they would deprive me next of my dressers and my housemaids; they wished to treat me like a girl, but I will show them that I am Queen of England."

The letter showed a fine spirit, but a constitutional sovereign may not be imperious in a matter of state. There was some divergence of opinion as to the queen's attitude at this meeting of the recently resigned Whig ministers, but the ultimate decision was that, as gentlemen, they should support her against Peel in what the Whig party and press called, "his attempt to deprive her of the society of her friends." At her particular request Lord Melbourne drafted the refusal of Peel's conditions. "The Queen, having considered the proposal made to her yesterday by Sir Robert Peel to remove the Ladies

of her Bedchamber, cannot consent to adopt a course which she conceives to be contrary to usage, and which is repugnant to her feelings."

In reply Peel declined to form a government, and Lord Melbourne resumed office to the openly expressed delight of the queen. There had been misunderstandings on both sides. Peel, with every wish to consult the queen's personal pleasure, had alarmed her by his indefinite proposal; she on her side believed that the Tories wished to encroach on her prerogative; all her queenly dignity was roused, and at her last interview with the Tory leader she had shown him in no measured terms that she was Queen of England. Peel was lacking in tact and knowledge of human character, or he would never have presented a high-spirited girl with what amounted to an ultimatum.

For the moment the queen was exultant over her victory and the discomfiture of the Tories, not realizing that in the eyes of the nation her action had a dangerous significance. The general feeling was voiced by Charles Greville, who wrote on May 12, 1839: "The Cabinet met yesterday, and resolved to take the Government again; they hope to interest the people in the Queen's quarrel, and having made it up with the Radicals, they think they can stand. It is

a high trial to our institutions when the wishes of a Princess of nineteen can overturn a great Ministerial combination, and when the most momentous matters of Government and legislation are influenced by her pleasure about her Ladies of the Bedchamber. The Whigs resigned because they had no longer the parliamentary support for their measures which they deemed necessary, and they consent to hold the Government without the removal of any of the difficulties which compelled them to resign, for the purpose of enabling the Queen to exercise her pleasure without any control or interference in the choice of the Ladies of her household. This is making the private gratification of the Queen paramount to the highest public considerations."

Such was, indeed, the situation; a situation fraught with no little peril at a time when party feeling ran so high. Grave constitutional crises have arisen from the independent action of English sovereigns, and Lord Melbourne, though he chivalrously stood by the queen, was clearly much perturbed, and perhaps a little alarmed, by this instance of her Majesty's willfulness and obstinacy. A remark he made at dinner one evening, shortly after he and his party returned to power, was considered by the *entourage* and the other guests, to be a direct warning to the

queen. Parliament had been prorogued by the queen, and to Lady Lyttleton, one of her ladies who was in attendance for the first time, fell the duty of taking the crown off her head when her Majesty was disrobing. One of the hairpins by which the crown was held caught in the queen's hair, and some difficulty was found in disentangling it, the queen suffering somewhat during the process. She described the incident at dinner to Lord Melbourne, saying: "To be sure, it was very nervous for poor Lady Lyttleton to do it before so many people, all looking at her, and never having done such a thing before." Melbourne immediately answered: "*Your Majesty might have said as Mary Queen of Scots did on the scaffold,* 'I am not accustomed to be undressed before so many people, nor by such attendants.'"

This crisis of the Ladies of the Bedchamber had an unfortunate effect upon the young queen's prestige. Sir Robert Peel was undoubtedly right in his contention, and ultimately the queen and Lord Melbourne made practical admission of their error by arranging that the Mistress of the Robes should be a political appointment, that all the other ladies of the household should be chosen from both Whig and Tory families, and that beyond this one post no lady of the queen's house-

hold should be chosen because of any political consideration. This rule continued to the queen's death, and it was always an accepted fact that her ladies were outside the sphere of politics, and that, with the exception of the Mistress of the Robes, no Prime Minister was responsible for their selection or their conduct in discharge of their duties. It entirely solved the difficult situation in which Sir Robert Peel was placed.

The queen herself, with characteristic candor, admitted some years later to Lord John Russell the mistake she had made. "It was entirely my own foolishness," she said. "I took no advice on the matter." There were nineteen changes of government during the queen's reign, and so clearly had she understood the danger, and the consequences to the nation and the throne of seeking to impose her will upon a minister contrary to his opinion, that she never again stepped beyond the limits laid down for her by the Constitution. As the years went past, and in the exercise of her office she gained a wider experience and deeper knowledge of men and the world, she was in a position to question the appointment of any minister whom she did not think capable of holding the office suggested for him. It was at once her right and her duty to question any appointment she herself thought

would not be for the good of the country. But this right was never again exercised arbitrarily, or upon grounds of personal dislike, or from any political motives, and as one of her Prime Ministers said of her: "The Queen never makes an objection without reason, and she is always ready to hear argument against her objection."

The queen learned this lesson in the harassing months of 1839; she likewise learned the danger to the sovereign of publicly espousing the cause of any one political party. Her triumph over the Tories, and the pleasure she expressed openly at a court ball because of the return of Lord Melbourne and the Whigs, roused the Tory aristocracy. Their newspapers spoke openly of her attitude; the queen spoke as openly of her dislike of the Tories, once saying at court: "The Tories do all in their power to make themselves odious to me." Two members of Parliament fought a duel because of remarks made by one of them in a public speech on the queen's political conduct; but it was at Ascot Races that year that the queen learned the full extent of the risk she ran in smiling upon one faction at the expense of its opponents. She drove over in state from Windsor with a large party of guests, and as the magnificent procession with its equerries riding beside the queen's carriage, its outriders and

servants in the royal red livery, swept along the course to the royal box, there was an ominous silence; the ringing cheers and shouts, the waving handkerchiefs that always welcomed her appearance in public, were absent. As the carriage stopped at the entrance to the box, and Lord Melbourne alighted, there was one long cry of execration and continued hooting. The Whig Prime Minister was accustomed to such manifestations, but the horror of the queen's guests and her suite may be imagined when, as she appeared on the balcony of the box, she herself was greeted by opprobrious cries and disloyal insults by those in the inclosure below. In those days the inclosure at Ascot was reserved exclusively for the aristocracy; money had not then the faculty of "Open Sesame" it possesses in our time. They were men and women, therefore, of the highest birth in the country who, respecting neither the rank, the sex, nor the youth of the sovereign to whom only a year ago many of them in Westminster Abbey had tendered their homage and sworn themselves her liegemen, insulted her so shamefully and so cruelly. Duchesses were seen screaming like viragoes. Party feeling had run to such a height that the greatest Tory noblemen took up the insult and shouted it at the young queen.

The moment was terrible to a young girl who had always been received with pleasure and enthusiasm; but she faced the shrieking crowd of elegantly dressed men and women calmly, and with cold disdain. This was the first and only occasion throughout her long reign that Queen Victoria was the object of unpopular manifestation, and then it was only on the part of a few hundreds of one class of her subjects, a class which had always enjoyed special privileges by right of birth, and which resented her open alliance with the Whigs.

Perhaps the queen, her perceptions sharpened by the recent crisis, grasped the actual cause of the insult, for after this unhappy spring of 1839, during which the *Times* had said that she "had lost all claims to respect," she never again "took sides" in politics. The lessons had been sharp and humiliating, but her acceptance of them was the first step toward the attainment of that great wisdom and skill in holding the balance between parties which was her distinguishing characteristic as a sovereign.

It seems incredible that Queen Victoria should ever have been insulted by any section of her people, but the cause was purely political. In her ignorance and youthful enthusiasm she had stepped for a moment from her throne into the

arena. There she found herself unprotected; and it is indicative of her strength of character that she accepted then, and for all her life, the knowledge that she had made a mistake.

The tension between the two parties of Whig and Tory was due to the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832. Political differences during that strenuous time developed into an absolute hatred which the passage of years had scarcely cooled. The queen, therefore, reaped, as it were, the aftermath of the harvest of discord between the parties, because she was frank, generous in sympathy to her friends, and unversed in the duties of her high position. She was very unhappy at this time, as Lord Shaftesbury notes in his diary "Dined last night at the palace. I cannot but love her, and will serve her. It is a duty and a pleasure—a duty to her and to God. Poor soul, she was low-spirited. 'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.' Oh, that she only knew what alone makes a yoke easy and a burden light!" In spite of the distress into which she was thrown by the attitude toward her of the Tories and the knowledge of her mistake, the queen made no difference to those about her. Lord Shaftesbury adds: "I should be most ungrateful not to feel and speak of her kindness and condescension with the warmest affection and loyalty. From the

hour she became Queen to the present day, I and mine have received a great deal of hospitality, invariably marked with a degree of ease, good humor, and considerateness that would be captivating in any private person. She manifests a desire to make her favors as pleasant as they are honorable, and in most instances (strange to say in a court) she is successful."

It is not improbable that, but for the absence abroad of Baron Stockmar in the early part of 1839, the Hastings scandal and the crisis of the Ladies of the Bedchamber would never have come about. Stockmar was private secretary to King Leopold, and one of the most zealous, devoted, and loyal of servants. Upon the queen's accession King Leopold had sent the baron to England in order that she might have the benefit of his invaluable experience and advice. He guided her through many difficulties in the first year of her reign, and if he had not been summoned to Brussels by King Leopold to accompany Prince Albert on a tour through Italy, the queen would never have been faced by the delicate problem affecting Lady Flora Hastings's character; the baron would have kept it from her. And in the Bedchamber question she would have had advice unbiassed by any question of party.

CHAPTER VII

THE QUEEN'S MARRIAGE

HE queen's marriage was naturally a matter of the highest moment to the country, since the Duke of Cumberland, now become King of Hanover, was her next heir. Although he had signalized his accession to the throne of his German state by depriving his subjects of their constitution, the duke proved himself to be a better king than could have been anticipated from his career in England. The popular feeling of the nation was, however, still strongly against him, and it became the universal wish of her subjects that the queen should marry. And, subject to the queen's consent, her future husband had already been chosen by her family.

Three months after her own birth a second son, Albert, was born to the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, the brother of the Duchess of Kent, and King Leopold. The names of the baby prince

and princess were immediately linked together in the family circle, and there is no doubt, from the constant references in the voluminous correspondence that passed between the Duchess of Kent and her Saxe-Coburg relatives, that the possibility of their marriage was discussed while they were still infants in arms. When he was only a few months old, his grandmother, the Dowager Duchess of Saxe-Coburg, wrote to her daughter, the Duchess of Kent, "The little fellow is the *pendant* to the pretty cousin," and constantly sent accounts of the progress of "Alberinchen," as she called him.

The subject of his niece's marriage had likewise engaged the attention of King William IV, and with a view of a possible attachment he had invited Prince William Henry, a younger son of the King of the Netherlands to pay a visit to England, but without any result.

When the Princess Victoria was seventeen King Leopold thought the moment had arrived for the cousins to meet. He had already sent his private secretary, Baron Stockmar, to Coburg to make close inquiries into the habits of life and the character of Prince Albert. His report showed the prince to be all that could be desired, and at King Leopold's suggestion the Duchess of Kent invited her brother, the Duke of Saxe-

Coburg, and his two sons to spend a month with her at Kensington Palace. The two young people thus had every opportunity of making one another's close acquaintance. It had been arranged that both the Princess Victoria and Prince Albert should be kept in ignorance of the reason of the visit. But the princess must have been favorably impressed by her handsome cousin, for after his departure King Leopold confided to her his hopes of their future union. Her letter in answer proves that her lifelong devotion to Prince Albert began during his visit in the spring of 1836. "I have now only to beg you, my dearest uncle, to take care of the health of one now so dear to me, and to take him under your special protection. I hope and trust that all will go on prosperously and well on this subject, now of so much importance to me."

Prince Albert was kept in ignorance of the possibility of the future, but the cousins corresponded, and at her own request King Leopold kept the princess informed of the prince's life and movements, and especially of his studies. When King William died, Prince Albert wrote to his cousin: "Now, you are Queen of the mightiest land in Europe. In your hand lies the happiness of millions. May Heaven assist you and strengthen you with all its strength in

that high but difficult task! I hope that your reign may be long, happy, and glorious; and that your efforts may be rewarded by the thankfulness and love of your subjects." The writer little dreamed how fully his wishes and hopes for his cousin would be fulfilled, and of the part he himself would play in bringing about their realization.

Shortly before her coronation King Leopold had written to the queen as to her marriage with Prince Albert, but in the first flush of her sovereignty, her days suddenly crowded with a thousand new interests and duties, with the power, for the first time in her life, of surrounding herself with brilliant and delightful people, the young sovereign, occupied by her duties of state, her hospitalities and the glamour of her position, felt in no hurry to take to herself a husband. She told her uncle that she did not wish to marry for three or four years at least, and for eighteen months the matter remained in abeyance, although her family and her ministers were anxious that she should make her choice; the latter very wisely left the question entirely to the queen.

The possibility of an alliance with a great queen fluttered all the courts of Europe, since, apparently, the young sovereign was heart

whole. Many young princes visited England in the two years the queen preferred to keep her independence, some of whom had doubtless matrimonial intentions. They began to come in 1837, for in the July of that year the Duchess of Sutherland, who was the first Mistress of the Robes to the queen, wrote: "There is a young Danish prince come over for a few days, rather genteel, only nineteen. I suppose he has been sent to see and be seen, but I should not think with any chance." A Prussian prince, the Duc de Nemours (son of the King of the French, and brother of King Leopold's wife), the Czarowitz of Russia, Prince William Henry of the Netherlands, and her cousin, the late Duke of Cambridge, were all reputed to be, more or less, suitors for her hand by the gossip of the court. The queen, however, showed no marked interest in any one of them, treating them all with the same exquisite courtesy as her guests.

After the crises of 1839, however, the queen looked upon marriage from a different point of view. She felt harassed by the cares of her position, lonely, and unhappy. There was much that she could not discuss even with her most intimate friends; she was always obliged to keep her personal interests as a woman separate from her interests as sovereign. Therefore, when

King Leopold visited her in September with other members of the Coburg family, he found her willing to accept his suggestion that Prince Albert and his elder brother should shortly come to England. The visit of her uncle, to whom she was deeply attached and upon whose judgment she entirely relied, and of her Coburg relatives, raised the queen's spirits; King Leopold's wise counsels gave her renewed confidence. When the party left England she insisted on accompanying them to Woolwich, where they took passage in a British man-of-war for Brussels and Germany. An eyewitness tells a charming story of the queen's leaving the vessel after taking farewell of her relations. "Old Sir Robert Otway and all the officers, of course, very pressing to assist her Majesty in getting down the ship's tall side; but no such thing. With her little face still all swollen with her recent floods of tears, she looked up with the greatest spirit, and said quite loud and silvery, 'No help, thank you! I am used to this!' and got down like an old boatswain. The next cheer I could have joined with pleasure, I assure you. She afterwards said to me, 'I was quite glad to find myself on a ship again, the first time since I came to the throne. *I do like* ships!'"

Prince Albert and his brother arrived at

Windsor in October, bringing with them the following letter from King Leopold:

"LAEKEN, October 8, 1839.

"MY DEAREST VICTORIA:

"Your cousins will be themselves the bearers of these lines. I recommend them to your *bienviellance*. They are good and honest creatures, deserving your kindness, and not pedantic, but really sensible and trustworthy.

"I have told them that your great wish is that they should be quite *unbefangen* [1] with you.

"I am sure that if you have anything to recommend to them they will be most happy to learn it from you.

"My dear Victoria,

"Your most devoted uncle,

"LEOPOLD R."

The queen herself thus described their meeting: "At half-past seven I went to the top of the staircase to receive my two dear cousins, Ernest and Albert, whom I found grown, changed, and embellished. It was with some emotion I beheld Albert, who is beautiful.

"I took them both to Mamma. Their clothes not having arrived, they could not appear at din-

[1] I. e., not to be on ceremony.

ner." They came to the drawing-room, however, after dinner, and Lord Melbourne told the queen that he observed a strong likeness between her and Prince Albert.

During the next four days the queen saw her cousin constantly, and daily the impression created in 1836 grew stronger. On October 14th she told Lord Melbourne that she had come to a decision about her marriage. The queen quoted his reply in her journal: "I think it will be very well received, for I hear that there is an anxiety now that it should be, and I am very glad of it. You will be much more comfortable; for a woman cannot stand alone for any time, in whatever position she may be."

The following day the queen proposed to her cousin. "It was a nervous thing to do," she told her aunt, the Duchess of Gloucester; but Prince Albert could not possibly have proposed to the Queen of England. She added, "He would never have presumed to take such a liberty." She described the interview in her diary thus: "On Tuesday, October 15th, the two Princes went out hunting early, but came back about twelve. At half-past twelve I sent for Albert. He came to the closet where I was alone. After a few minutes I said to him I thought he must be aware why I wished him to come, and that it would

make me too happy if he would consent to what I wished—namely, to marry me.

"There was no hesitation on his part, but the offer was received with the greatest demonstration of kindness and affection. He is perfection in every way—in beauty, in everything. I told him I was quite unworthy of him. He said he would be very happy to spend his life with me. How I will strive to make him feel as little as possible the great sacrifice he has made! I told him it *was* a great sacrifice on his part, which he would not allow. I then told him to fetch Ernest, which he did, who congratulated us both and seemed very happy. He told me how perfect his brother was."

From that day the queen's private life was no longer "sad," or "lonely," until death crushed all the brightness out of her life twenty-one years later.

The correspondence between the queen and King Leopold has a particular interest, as it shows her Majesty's directness and frankness even in a matter where most newly engaged young women of her age are rather shy, and express themselves in roundabout phrases. "I love him," she wrote proudly to her uncle on the day she had proposed; "I love him more than I can say, and I shall do everything in my power to

render this sacrifice as small as I can. He seems to have great tact—a very necessary thing in his position. These last few days have passed like a dream to me, and I am so much bewildered by it all that I hardly know how to write. But I do feel very happy. It is absolutely necessary that this determination of mine should be known to no one but yourself and to Uncle Ernest [1] until after the meeting of Parliament, as it would be considered otherwise neglectful on my part not to have assembled Parliament at once to inform them of it.

"Lord Melbourne has acted in this business, as he has always done toward me, with the greatest kindness and affection. We also think it better, and Albert quite approves of it, that we should be married very soon after Parliament meets, about the beginning of February; and, indeed, loving Albert as I do, I cannot wish it to be delayed. My feelings are a little changed, I must say, since last spring, when I said I could not think of marrying for three or four years; but seeing Albert has changed all this.

"Pray, dearest uncle, forward these two letters to Uncle Ernest, to whom I beg you will enjoin strict secrecy, and explain these details which I have not time to do, and to faithful

[1] The Duke of Saxe-Coburg, Prince Albert's father.

Stockmar. I think you might tell Louise [1] of it, but none of her family.

"I wish to keep the dear young gentlemen here till the end of next week. Ernest's sincere pleasure gives me great delight. He does so adore dearest Albert.

"Ever, dearest uncle,

"Your devoted niece,

"V. R."

The touching note of reliance on Prince Albert's opinion, which finds expression in this first letter the queen wrote after her engagement in "and Albert quite approves," is the note that ran throughout their married life. It was a new joy to the queen to consult or defer to the personal wishes of any person; for by virtue of her position her own desires since her accession had always come first. From the outset her one fear was that the relationship of husband and wife should never be lost sight of, and that Prince Albert should not be considered merely as "the queen's husband."

King Leopold's reply shows the wisdom of the kindly relative whose counsels had so often guided the queen in moments of difficulty; the

[1] Queen of King Leopold and daughter of Louis Philippe, King of the French.

happiness of the queen's married life proved the foresight and judgment of character set forth in the following letter:

"I had, when I learned your decision, almost the feeling of old Simeon, 'Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.' Your choice has been for these last years my conviction of what might and would be best for your happiness; and just because I was convinced of it, and knew how strangely fate often changes what one tries to bring about, as being the best plan one could fix upon—the maximum of a good arrangement—I feared that it would not happen. In your position, which may, and will, perhaps, become in future even more difficult in a political point of view, you could not exist without having a happy and agreeable *intérieur*. And I am much deceived (which I think I am not), or you will find in Albert just the very qualities and disposition which are indispensable for your happiness, and which will suit your own character, temper, and mode of life.

"You say most amiably that you consider it a sacrifice on the part of Albert. This is true in many points, because his position will be a difficult one; but much—I may say all—will depend on your affection for him. If you love him and

are kind to him, he will easily bear the bothers of his position, and there is a steadiness and at the same time a cheerfulness in his character which will facilitate this.

"I think your plans are excellent. If Parliament had been called at an unusual time it would make them uncomfortable; and if, therefore, they receive the communication at the opening of the session it will be best. The marriage, as you say, might then follow as closely as possible."

Of Prince Albert his wise uncle wrote:

"Albert is a very agreeable companion. His manners are so gentle and harmonious that one likes to have him near oneself. I always found him so when I had him near me, and I think his travels have still further improved him. He is full of talent and fun, and draws cleverly. I am glad to hear that they please the people who see them (Prince Albert and his brother Ernest). They deserve it, and were rather nervous about it. I trust they will enliven your *séjour* in the old castle, and may Albert be able to strew roses without thorns on the pathway of life of our good Victoria. He is well qualified to do so.

"Your devoted uncle,

"LEOPOLD R."

The prince himself wrote enthusiastically to Coburg of the queen: "Victoria does whatever she fancies I should wish or like, and we talk together a great deal about our future life, which she promises me to make as happy as possible." But he was not blind to the difficulties that must always beset the path of the consort of a reigning queen. "With the exception of my relations toward her" (the queen), he wrote in another letter, "my future position will have its dark sides, and the sky will not always be blue and unclouded. But life has its thorns in every position, and the consciousness of having used one's power and endeavors for an object so great as that of promoting the good of so many will surely be sufficient to support me."

The first time Prince Albert appeared in public with the queen, although the engagement was still officially secret, was at a review at Windsor on November 1st. The queen was now very deeply in love. "At ten minutes to twelve," she wrote, "I set off for the ground in my Windsor uniform and cap"—this was a military cap which she wore for the first time—"on my old charger 'Leopold,' with my beloved Albert, looking so handsome in his uniform (a green uniform of a Coburg regiment), on my right. . . . A horrid day! Cold—dreadfully blowing—and, in ad-

dition, raining hard when we had been out a few minutes. It, however, ceased when we came to the ground. I rode alone down the ranks, and then took my place, as usual, with dearest Albert on my right, and Sir John Macdonald on my left, and saw the troops march past. They afterwards manœuvred. The Rifles looked beautiful. It was piercingly cold, and I had my cape on, which dearest Albert settled comfortably for me. He was so cold, being *en grande tenue*, with high boots."

A fortnight later Prince Albert returned to Coburg, and the following day the queen announced her engagement to the Dowager Queen Adelaide and the members of her family. Sir Robert Peel, who saw the letter to Queen Adelaide, said Queen Victoria was "as full of love as Juliet." On November 23d the queen herself made the announcement to the Privy Council which had been specially summoned to Buckingham Palace.

"At two," the queen wrote, "I went in. The room was full, but I hardly knew who was there. Lord Melbourne I saw looking at me with tears in his eyes, but he was not near me. I then read my short declaration. I felt my hands shake, but I did not make one mistake. I felt most happy when it was over. . . . Of course, there was no

end of congratulations. I wore a beautiful bracelet with the Prince's picture, and it seemed to give me courage at the Council."

Croker, moved like the rest of the assembly by the sweet womanliness and dignity of the queen, for once forgot his venom. "I have taken a fine sheet of paper," he wrote to Lady Hardwicke, "in honor of the Queen to write to you what passed in Council. We had a very full Council, and the great Duke (of Wellington) attended. When we had assembled to the number of eighty, and as many had taken their seats as could at a long table, her Majesty was handed in by the Lord Chamberlain, and bowing to us all round, sat down, saying, 'Your Lordships will be seated.' She then unfolded a paper, and read her declaration. I cannot describe to you with what a mixture of self-possession and feminine delicacy she read the paper. Her voice, which is naturally beautiful, was clear and untroubled, and her eye was bright and calm, neither bold nor downcast, but firm and soft. There was a blush on her cheek which made her look handsome and more interesting, and certainly she did look as interesting and as handsome as any young lady I ever saw. After the Lord President had asked her permission to publish her declaration, she bowed consent, handed him

the paper, rose, bowed all round, and retired, led as before by the Lord Chamberlain, to the outer room, where the attendants who were not of the Council had waited."

The declaration was short and simple.

"It is my intention to ally myself in marriage with the Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Deeply impressed with the solemnity of the engagement which I am about to contract, I have not come to this decision without mature consideration, nor without feeling a strong assurance that, with the blessing of Almighty God, it will at once secure my domestic felicity, and serve the interests of my country."

A grave mistake, seeing the religious temper of the time, was made by Lord Melbourne in drawing up this declaration. It made no mention of the prince's form of belief. The Tories did not approve of the match, and instantly seized upon the omission. The Lutheran principles of the House of Saxe-Coburg were a matter of history, the family having been one of the first of the royal houses of Germany to break away from the Church of Rome at the Reformation, but the prince's uncle, King Leopold, and another relative, Prince Ferdinand, had recently married Roman Catholic wives—the first the

daughter of King Louis Philippe of the French, and the second the Queen of Portugal. These marriages were quite sufficient, and an absurd report was spread abroad that the queen's future husband was a papist.

It seemed as if the fates were conspiring against the queen's love idyll. Difficulty after difficulty was raised. The queen in her intense affection wished to give Prince Albert a position which it was not within her own power or that of her ministers to grant, without the sanction of Parliament. She considered, as she had told King Leopold, that in becoming her husband her cousin was making a great sacrifice, and was exiling himself from his family and country for her sake; and she, therefore, thought that neither she nor her people could sufficiently reward him. The whole-souled generosity of her character was never more apparent than in the discussions with her ministers which followed the announcement of her engagement. She wanted to shower honors, dignities, everything that was within her power upon the man she loved. Lord Melbourne knew that she was asking more than Parliament could grant, and that it would be constitutionally impossible for the prince to be given any share in the government of the country; that was vested by the law in the queen's hands, and in the

queen's hands it must remain. There was a constant correspondence between the royal lovers, the queen consulting the prince's wishes even in the most minute details, he replying with great wisdom and good sense. She was inclined to be indignant with her ministers when they did not support her wishes with regard to the prince's position, but when she found that he agreed with them she at once acquiesced, for she had already come to value his opinion and to rely on his discretion.

In her difficult and trying position she needed support, and this Prince Albert gave her from the day of their engagement. His clearness of judgment is shown in a letter he wrote during a much-debated question concerning the formation of his future household: "Now I come to a second point, which you touch upon in your letter, and which I have also much at heart; I mean the choice of the persons who are to belong to my household. The maxim, 'Tell me whom he associates with, and I will tell you who he is,' must here especially not be lost sight of. I should wish, particularly, that the selection should be made without regard to politics, for if I am really to keep myself free from all parties, my people must not belong exclusively to one side. Above all, these appointments should not

be mere party rewards, but they should possess other recommendations besides those of party. Let them either be of very high rank, or very rich, or very clever, or who have performed important services for England. It is very necessary that they should be chosen from both sides —the same number of Whigs as of Tories; and above all do I wish that they should be well-educated men and of high character, who, as I have already said, shall have distinguished themselves in their several positions, whether it be in the army, the navy, or in the scientific world."

The first question that arose, and one of especial importance in a court where each person had his or her place according to their birth, was the precedence Prince Albert should take. His father not being a monarch, but only the ruler of a duchy, the prince, although of what is styled "royal birth," only bore the title of highness. According to his rank, therefore, he would have followed after the whole of the English royal family, who were royal highnesses, in any ceremony or court function, since a royal highness is of higher rank than a highness. It was obviously impossible from the queen's point of view that her husband should be separated from her in public by all the English princes and prin-

cesses; she felt it would be a slur upon his dignity thus to emphasize the difference in rank. She, therefore, created him a " royal highness "; and this was the only title the prince would accept at her generous and willing hands. " My position," the prince wrote to a relative, " will be very pleasant, inasmuch as I have refused all the offered titles. I keep my own name and remain what I was."

Lord Melbourne was of the opinion that the prince's official position should be the same as that occupied by Prince George of Denmark, the husband of Queen Anne, but it was thought that the queen herself had no right to settle the question, or to accord the prince any particular position, that right resting with Parliament.

When she opened the session in January, 1840, she announced her engagement, and asked for the approbation of her legislators with grave simplicity and dignity. " I humbly implore," she said in her speech from the throne, " that the Divine blessing may prosper this union and render it conducive to the interests of my people as well as of my own domestic happiness; and it will be to me a source of the most lively satisfaction to find the resolution I have taken approved by my Parliament."

Parliament signified its approval, but when

Lord Melbourne asked it to grant the prince an annuity of £50,000 a year, there was an outcry not only from the Tories but from his own side, the sum being considered unnecessarily extravagant. The same amount had been given to Prince George of Denmark, and to the queen consorts of George II, George III, and William III; Lord Melbourne was, therefore, acting upon precedence in making the proposal. A Radical member moved an amendment to reduce the sum to £21,000, but this was lost by over two hundred votes. A Tory member, noted for his insularity, proposed a sum of £30,000 a year, and his leader, Sir Robert Peel, having spoken strongly in favor of this second amendment, it was put to the vote and carried by a majority of 104.

It was a painful moment, and the Ministry was aghast. The Whigs instantly accused the Tories of "acting from a spiteful recollection of the events of last May," and roundly dubbed them "disloyal." Lord John Russell went so far as to declare that the vote was an insult to the queen, which it undoubtedly was.

Despite Sir Robert Peel's denial that his party was animated by political bias, Tory feeling still ran so strongly against the queen and the Whigs, that it certainly influenced their attitude in this

delicate and purely non-party question, but when the same Tory member who had proposed the £30,000 allowance, brought in another amendment that, in the event of his surviving the queen, the prince should lose the allowance if he remarried a Roman Catholic, or if he did not reside in England for six months of the year, Sir Robert, feeling matters were going too far and that such a provision " implied want of confidence in the prince," was the first to move its rejection. When the question came before the House of Lords for its ratification of the decision of the Commons, the Duke of Wellington, the Tory leader in the Upper Chamber, proposed and carried an amendment " censuring Ministers for having failed to make a public declaration that the Prince was a Protestant, and able to take the Holy Communion in the form prescribed by the Church of England."

The queen was deeply distressed, not so much by the public slight put upon her by the House of Commons, but by the slight put upon Prince Albert. Nor was her cause for distress on his account at an end. A bill was shortly afterwards introduced into Parliament for the naturalization of the prince as a British subject, of which one of the clauses dealt with his precedence, which it suggested should be that next

to the queen. The Dukes of Sussex and Cambridge, the queen's uncles, had agreed to waive their right of place, and to follow Prince Albert instead of preceding him—a kindly consideration which the queen never forgot. The King of Hanover, however, who still held all the rights of his birth as Duke of Cumberland in England, flatly and rudely declined, protesting against the position it was desired to give the prince. A large number of the Tory peers were of his opinion, or professed to be so, and the Duke of Wellington declared that the prince's proper position was after the royal family. There was such determined opposition that Lord Melbourne withdrew the clause, the result being that the prince, to the intense chagrin of the queen, was left without "any specific place assigned by Parliament." The prince was already on his way to England when the news that Parliament had reduced his proposed allowance, and refused to give him precedence, reached him, and he naturally feared that the marriage was unpopular in the country.

It would not be within the bounds of actual truth to say that the marriage was popular, and it would be equally inexact to say that it was unpopular. The English people knew nothing of Prince Albert beyond that he was the younger

son of a German prince, that he was the queen's cousin, her junior by a few months, and that he was not very rich. They were weary of German princes as exemplified by the House of Hanover; there was also an insular prejudice against "foreigners," and the feeling that the queen of so great a country might have made a more brilliant match. The absurd story of the prince being a Roman Catholic had likewise given a wrong impression. But the attitude of Parliament in no way represented the actual feeling of the country. Notwithstanding their disclaimers the Tories had taken advantage of the opportunity of striking a blow at the Whig government presented by the question of the prince's allowance, and the bill for his naturalization. The consequent slight upon the queen and the prince was, therefore, solely the outcome of the intense feeling then existing between the two political parties, while the attitude of the country in general was rather one of suspended judgment than of approval or disapproval.

When the prince arrived in London on February 8, 1840, his fears as to the unpopularity of the marriage must have been dissipated, for not only was his reception in the capital most enthusiastic, but upon his landing at Dover, and during his journey to London by road, he had

been welcomed by vast crowds which were more than favorably impressed by his grace and dignified bearing, and by his handsomeness.

Immediately upon his arrival at Buckingham Palace he took the oaths that made him a British subject, before the Lord Chancellor of England, and two days later the marriage took place in the Chapel Royal at St. James's Palace.

The prince, who looked superbly handsome in his uniform of a field marshal of the British Army (to which rank he had been appointed by the queen) and his collar of the Order of the Garter (with which the queen had invested him), passed the few moments between his own arrival and that of his bride in talking to the Dowager Queen Adelaide, who with the Duchess of Kent and the Duke of Cambridge stood upon the left side of the altar; upon the right was the queen's aunt, the Princess Sophia, and her cousin, the Princess Augusta of Cambridge; the altar itself was laden with the magnificent gold plate and candlesticks which are always used on occasions of state. When the queen entered, the organ burst forth into the national anthem, and advancing slowly and with great dignity she knelt for a while in prayer and then sat down in her chair of state. There was a slight pause; the queen then rose, and taking her place by Prince

Albert's side proceeded with him to the altar, the Duke of Sussex, the uncle who had the honor of giving her away, standing at her left hand. Lady Wilhelmina Stanhope (afterwards Duchess of Cleveland), who had been one of the queen's train bearers at her coronation, was one of her Majesty's twelve bridesmaids. Her account of the ceremony is so vivid and interesting that it is worthy of quotation in full:

"The day proved very rainy early in the morning, but it cleared up at about eleven, and the sun shone out brightly upon the bride as she passed through the rooms (of St. James's Palace) with her procession on her way to the chapel.

"The procession was thus formed:

THE QUEEN

Left	*Right*
Lady Adelaide Paget,	Lady Caroline Lennox,
Lady Sarah Villiers,	Lady Elizabeth Howard,
Lady Fanny Cowper,	Lady Ida Hay,
Lady Elizabeth West,	Lady Wilhelmina Stanhope,
Lady Mary Grimston,	Lady Jane Bouverie,
Lady Mary Howard,	Lady Eleanor Paget.

"I arrived about eleven with my *pendant*, Elizabeth West. Our orders were to go and lock

PEN AND INK SKETCH MADE BY THE QUEEN FOR THE DRESSES OF THE BRIDESMAIDS AT HER OWN WEDDING.

This design was faithfully copied.

ourselves up in the Queen's dressing room until she arrived; and accordingly Lord Erroll, whom we found at the foot of the staircase, gave us in charge to a Mr. Dobel, who, to our horror, marshalled us through the State rooms, filled with people waiting to see the procession—some, as I am told, having been sitting there since half-past eight.

"The dressing room, where the twelve young ladies in tulle and white roses were immured for one hour and a half, fortunately commanded a view of the Park, and we spent our time in watching the lines of Foot Guards forming under our windows, the evolutions of the Blues, who looked a good deal rusted by the rain, the people in the Park, etc.

"At about half-past twelve the Queen arrived, looking as white as a sheet, but not apparently nervous. She was dressed in white satin and Honiton lace, with the collars of her Orders, which are very splendid, round her neck, and on her head a very high wreath of orange flowers, a very few diamonds studded into her hair behind, in which was fastened her veil, also, I believe, of Honiton lace, and very handsome.

"Her train was of white satin, trimmed with orange flowers, but rather too short for the number of young ladies who carried it. We

were all huddled together, and scrambled rather than walked along, kicking each other's heels and treading on each other's gowns.

"The Queen was perfectly composed and quiet, but unusually pale. She walked very slowly, giving ample time for all the spectators to gratify their curiosity, and certainly she was never before more earnestly scrutinized.

"I thought she trembled a little as she entered the chapel, where Prince Albert, the Queen Dowager, and all the Royal family were waiting for her. She took her place on the left side of the altar, and knelt down in prayer for a few minutes, and Prince Albert followed her example. He wore a field marshal's uniform, and two large white satin rosettes on his shoulders, with the garter, etc. Perhaps he appeared awkward from embarrassment, but he was certainly a good deal perplexed and agitated in delivering the responses.

"Her Majesty was quite calm and composed. When Prince Albert was asked whether he would take this woman for his wife, she turned full round and looked into his face as he replied, '*I will.*' Her own responses were given in the same clear, musical tones with which she reads her speeches in the House of Lords, and in much the same manner.

"The Duke of Sussex was greatly affected, and Lord FitzWilliam was heard to sob responsively from the gallery, but no one else seemed in the least disturbed. The Duke of Sussex has a story that no one cried but one of the singing boys; however, I can vouch for *his* tears. The Queen's two tears, mentioned in the *Morning Post*, I did not see.

"The old Duke of Cambridge was decidedly gay, making very audible remarks from time to time. The Queen Dowager looked quite the *beau idéal* of a Queen Dowager—grave, dignified, and very becomingly dressed in purple velvet and ermine, and a purple velvet *coiffure* with a magnificent diamond branch.

"After it was all over we filed out of the chapel in the same order, the Duke of Cambridge very gallantly handing the princesses down the steps with many audible civilities. The Queen gave her hand to her husband, who led her back through the rooms (where her reception was enthusiastic) to the Throne Room, where the Royal Family, the Coburgs, etc., signed their names in the Registry Book.

"The Queen then presented each of her bridesmaids with a brooch, an eagle (Prince Albert's crest) of turquoise and pearls. After this she took her departure down the back stairs, at the

foot of which I consigned the train to Prince Albert's care, who seemed a little nervous about getting into the carriage with a lady with a tail six yards long and voluminous in proportion."

There is a slight discrepancy between the Duchess of Cleveland's account and that of other spectators of the royal marriage. The young bridesmaid was not only behind the queen, but there were three other ladies between her Majesty and herself. She would scarcely, therefore, have been able to see the queen's face or note the signs of emotion with which the solemnity and sacredness of the ceremony filled her young sovereign. Another lady of the court wrote: "The Queen's look and manner were very pleasing; her eyes much swollen with tears, but great happiness in her countenance; and her look of confidence and comfort at the Prince when they walked away as man and wife was very pretty to see."

The newly married pair drove from St. James's Palace to Buckingham Palace, whence they had both come for the ceremony, amidst the booming of cannon and the cheers of a vast multitude that filled the Mall. A brilliant wedding breakfast followed, and then the queen and Prince Albert set out for Windsor, where the short honeymoon was spent. Unfortunately, the brief sunshine

that had shone on the queen's procession to St. James's gave way to torrential rain and a violent wind, but Greville says: "Nevertheless, a countless multitude thronged the Park, and was scattered over the town. I never beheld such a congregation as there was, in spite of the weather." The downpour in no way damped the loyal ardor of the dense throngs who had stood for hours, waiting to greet their sovereign and the husband of her choice, and the queen herself wrote: "Our reception was most enthusiastic, hearty, and gratifying in every way, the people quite deafening us with their cheers, and horsemen, gigs, etc., going along with us." From London to Windsor the road was so crowded that at times it was difficult for the escort to force a way through for the royal carriage, and it was eight o'clock before they reached the Castle, being accompanied from Eton by all the boys at the school, who formed themselves into an additional guard of honor.

The honeymoon lasted only two days, the royal family and the prince's family joining them on the 10th; for two days more there was much merrymaking at Windsor, and then the court returned to London.

The queen was radiantly happy. "I understand," wrote a lady of the court, "she is in ex-

tremely high spirits. Such a new thing for her to *dare* to be *unguarded* in conversing with anybody; and with her frank and fearless nature the restraints she has hitherto been under, from one reason and another, with everybody, must have been most painful." No other woman in the history of the world has been called upon to exercise the rights and bear the burden of sovereignty at the age of eighteen, alone, and no one except the queen herself could realize the difficulties, the loneliness, and the distress she suffered during her first two years upon the throne, despite their outward brilliancy, and their glamour of power and independence. She herself described her marriage as a "safe haven." It brought her a happiness that falls to the lot of few women, whatever their position, and contrasting the fullness and completeness of her married life with the brief period when she reigned in splendid isolation, debarred by reason of her position from discussing her inmost thoughts with any friend or relative, however intimate, it is easy to understand the feelings with which her Majesty regarded that portion of her reign, and of which she wrote: "A worse school for a young girl, or one more detrimental to all natural feelings and affections, cannot well be imagined than the position of a Queen at eighteen, without ex-

perience, and without a husband to guide and support her. This the Queen can state from painful experience, and she thanks God that none of her dear daughters are exposed to such dangers."

CHAPTER VIII

EARLY MARRIED LIFE

HE student of history could justly draw a line in his text-books beneath the year 1839, indicating that it marked the close of a period, for, apart from the personal joy and happiness her marriage with Prince Albert brought the queen, it had a far-reaching effect morally, socially, and politically upon the welfare of the nation.

Under the Georges, the court—with the exception of that of the third of the name—had set an example of license, heavy drinking, gambling, and of open disregard for the moral law, an example that spread through every rank like the ripples caused by throwing a pebble into a pool. When the queen ascended the throne it was considered no reproach for men to drink themselves senseless after dinner; indeed, the man who could not drink his bottle of port after the ladies had left the table was considered a poor creature.

Noblemen of the highest rank joining the ladies after dinner in a state of semi-intoxication apparently created no disgust, and the habit of heavy drinking continued until the queen herself ended it, at least so far as the court was concerned. Girl though she was, she set her face sternly against the practice the moment she became her own mistress; and she expressed her disapprobation with great tact and skill. When she went to the drawing-room with her lady guests and attendants after dinner, she remained standing until the gentlemen came into the room. The knowledge that her Majesty was standing until the gentlemen left the table made it impossible for them to stay behind longer than the few minutes necessary for the drinking of coffee. This quiet but significant action of the girl queen had a most beneficial effect, and by the time she married, society was beginning to look askance at " one-bottle " and " two-bottle " men. But the prestige of the throne had suffered too severely at the hands of George IV and some of his brothers for the young queen's disapproval of morals or of manners to affect a circle much wider than that of her *entourage*. Her marriage instantly gave her a moral power over her people she had not before possessed. The private life of sovereigns has a double effect upon their sub-

jects—the one moral, the other political. A dissolute court, as is evidenced by those of Charles II and of George IV, both as regent and king, makes a dissolute people. When scandal attaches to the names of monarchs they lose the confidence of their subjects, and lacking that confidence they lose all prestige in affairs of state which in no way concern their private lives or their personal characters. On the other hand, the spectacle presented to the nation by the domestic happiness of the queen, the purity of her life, her devotion as a wife and a mother, created a profound respect for the woman, and that respect created confidence in the sovereign, a confidence that yearly increased until it became a deep and personal affection that will ever remain a treasured tradition of the British people.

The only alloy in the queen's marriage was the attitude of the Parliament in preventing any grant of precedence to her husband. At her first levée, a few days after the wedding, the prince stood at her left hand, but there were public ceremonials shortly to be attended; and difficulties needing the exercise of much care and tact were already looming ahead. The life of courts and the movements of royal personages must necessarily be ruled by etiquette, and at that period the etiquette of the English court was more in-

volved and complicated than it was later. In her own palaces Prince Albert would naturally take his proper place as the queen's husband, but in public ceremonies there would arise the question of his proper precedence, with all the tiresome details consequent upon its arrangement, according to circumstances. The queen was torn between her desire to give her husband the honor of place she thought his due, and the difficulty raised for her by Parliament. Happily her perplexity was speedily ended. The diarist, Charles Greville, was clerk to the Privy Council. He was much interested in the discussion in the House of Lords as to the prince's precedence, and, looking through the archives of which he had charge, discovered that the question need never have been brought before Parliament, as the queen had an absolute legal right to give the prince any precedence she chose. He consulted with three of the most eminent lawyers of the time, who agreed in his opinion, and then embodied his discovery in a pamphlet which Lord Melbourne submitted to the queen and Prince Albert, and also sent to the Lord Chancellor. Greville's pamphlet settled the vexed question, and the queen by letters patent immediately gave the prince precedence next after herself, also creating him a member of her Privy Council.

It may be thought that this question of the prince's precedence has been discussed at too great a length, but it had an important bearing not only on the prince's position in the mind of the public, but also on the private life of the queen. Greville gives an instance of the doubt that existed in the minds of the queen's relatives until the matter was definitely settled. He had sent his pamphlet to the Duke of Wellington, who agreed with his conclusions entirely. A few days later Greville was desired to call at Apsley House, and was told by the Duke of Wellington that the queen's uncle, the Duke of Cambridge, "had sent for Lord Lyndhurst to consult him; that they were invited to meet the Queen on Friday at the Queen Dowager's, and he wanted to know what he was to do about giving precedence to Prince Albert. Lord Lyndhurst came to Apsley House to see the Duke about it, and they agreed to report to the Duke of Cambridge that the Queen had an unquestionable right to give him any precedence she pleases, and that he had better concede it without making any difficulty. The Duke acquiesced, and accepted the invitation." This story shows that, without a definite settlement of the question, there would have been a constantly recurring possibility of the assertion by some member or other of the royal family

of the right of precedence before the prince, in private life as well as in public, and the result must naturally have strained the relations of affection and interest which existed between the queen and her uncles. Once the queen's right to accord her husband precedence was established, the members of her family with one exception, the King of Hanover, respected her Order in Council most loyally.

Although the queen was able to give her husband his proper place, his position at the outset was most difficult and embarrassing. There was no shadow in their relations as husband and wife. A lady wrote from Windsor in the October of 1840: "It is really delightful and quite touching, do you know, to observe him and his wife—so happy, such an increasing, pretty happiness, it seems! Not a look or a tone of hers but expresses the most respectful, confiding affection —it is the most perfect wife's manner one can imagine." But Prince Albert felt, and felt justly, that his duty was to be something more than merely the husband of the queen. From the first he was guided by one principle: "To sink his own individual existence in that of his wife; to aim at no power by himself or for himself; to shun all ostentation; to assume no separate responsibility before the public, but continuing

anxiously to watch every part of the public business in order to be able to advise and assist her at any moment in any of the difficult and multifarious questions brought before her, whether political, social, or personal, as the natural head of her family, superintendent of her household, and manager of her private affairs; her sole confidential adviser in politics, and only assistant in her communications with the officers of her Government." The ministers, however, were jealous of his possible influence with the queen, and for two years he was purposely excluded from any share in public business, and was not allowed to be present at the interviews between the queen and her political advisers. Lord Melbourne, however, at the queen's particular request, consented that she should show the prince papers dealing with foreign affairs.

The position made both husband and wife unhappy. "He ought to be, and is, above me in everything really," wrote the queen in her diary nearly two years after their marriage, "and, therefore, I wish that he should be equal in rank with me"—a touching expression of her increasing devotion and admiration. But the prince was steadily making himself master of the intricacies of English politics. His knowledge of continental affairs was speedily recognized by Lord Mel-

bourne, and in a little while after his marriage he was able to write: "Victoria allows me to take much part in foreign affairs, and I think I have already done some good. I always commit my views to paper, and then communicate them to Lord Melbourne. He seldom answers me, but I have often had the satisfaction of seeing him act entirely in accordance with what I have said." Toward the end of 1841 the queen's ministers recognized that the prince's abilities were of the highest order, while his attitude had convinced them that so far from seeking any personal power—as they had at first imagined—his sole desire was to be of service to his wife; he began to be present at the political interviews, and gradually was freely accorded those rights which he had expressed his belief were his duty to fulfil. Lord Melbourne gave up his post of the queen's political private secretary to the prince, and husband and wife now worked together in the government of the country. The queen was inexpressibly content; there was now no separation of interests, and it was from her husband that she learned the beginnings of that wisdom, tolerance, and insight which distinguished her reign. It was about this time that the prince wrote to his father: "All I can say about my political position is that I study the

politics of the day with great industry, and continue to keep myself free from all parties. I take active interest in all national institutions and associations. I speak quite openly to the Ministers on all subjects so as to obtain information, and meet on all sides with much kindness. I endeavor quietly to be of as much use to Victoria in her position as I can be."

So completely did the prince gain the confidence of the ministry that when in July, 1841, it was officially announced that the birth of an heir to the throne might be expected, and a bill was presented to Parliament appointing him regent in the event of the queen's death, it was passed without the demur or any of the distressing discussions which had marked the introduction of the measures for his allowance and naturalization. The prince's first business had been to create more friendly relations between the queen and the Tories. When the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel were, in consequence, bidden to court and received with "marked civility" by the queen, it was understood that she had a wise counselor in her husband; thenceforward the strained relations between that party and the court passed into history. The Tories shared the confidence of the Whigs in Prince Albert, and when the Regency Bill was presented they ex-

pressed that confidence by a vote which must have been as flattering to the prince as it was consoling to the queen. From this time onward ministers never questioned Prince Albert's right to be consulted or to counsel the queen, and when the queen opened and prorogued Parliament he sat beside the throne, but on a lower step, in an armchair.

Four months after their marriage the queen ran a serious risk of her life. One afternoon in June she and the Prince Consort were driving up Constitution Hill when, suddenly, without the least warning, a boy of eighteen, called Oxford, fired two pistols, one after the other, at the queen. He was so close to the carriage that it was a miracle the shots did not take effect; he made no attempt to escape, and was instantly seized by the bystanders. The queen's courage excited universal admiration; she was "perfectly cool, and not in the least alarmed." But, as at all the crises of her life, her thought was for others rather than herself. No sooner had the boy—who was proved to be insane—been taken away than she gave orders to be driven to the house of the Duchess of Kent, in order that her mother might be spared the shock of hearing the news, and also to assure her of her safety. After the queen's marriage the Duchess of Kent

no longer lived at Buckingham Palace, but had a separate establishment of her own at Ingestre House in Belgrave Square, for which the queen paid £2,000 a year rental, as the King of Hanover declined to give up his apartments in St. James's Palace to the duchess, although he never used them. Mother and daughter, however, saw each other every day, the duchess almost invariably dining and lunching with the queen and Prince Albert.

When she had visited her mother, the queen resumed her drive and went to Hyde Park. The news of the attempt on her life had now spread over the town, and she was received in the Park with overwhelming enthusiasm. In those days society crowded the Row on horseback in the afternoon during the season; there was a dense throng of carriages, and many thousands hastened on foot as soon as they heard the queen was there. The affection manifested by this spontaneous outburst touched the queen profoundly; it was, indeed, a remarkable expression of feeling from a crowd that contained many Tories, and who still regarded their sovereign as a political opponent. The ladies and gentlemen on horseback formed themselves into a bodyguard, and, surrounding the carriage, escorted her back to the palace, cheering loudly the while.

In the following November the Princess Royal was born at Buckingham Palace. There was little wonder that the queen's love for her husband grew deeper and deeper; his devotion was unceasing. It was he who lifted her from her bed to the sofa, and who wheeled her into the next room; he would allow no one else to do it. He read aloud to her, wrote her letters. Whatever part of the castle he might be in, and whatever the work upon which he might be engaged, he would come instantly the queen asked for him, " with a sweet smile upon his face." " In short," says the Duke of Argyll, " his care of her was like that of a mother. Nor could there be a wiser or more judicious nurse."

The court went to Windsor for Christmas, and returned to London in January, 1841, for the christening of the infant princess. A letter the queen wrote to a friend before leaving Windsor is characteristic of the kindness and charm which bound her personal attendants, and those whom she honored with her friendship, so closely to her. Sovereigns " command," but the queen, except upon formal occasions, " wished," " desired," " requested."

" WINDSOR, January 21, 1841.

" We are very sorry to go to London, as we enjoy ourselves here so much. We have been

driving these last two evenings. Lord and Lady Leveson are staying here. He is one of the best of drivers, but is now lame with a bad knee. . . . I must not omit to tell you that the christening of our little girl will take place on February 10th in the evening at Buckingham Palace. I should much wish you to attend me on that occasion. It will be in full dress, and everybody in white. There will only be a large full-dress dinner immediately after it."

What can be more delicate or charming than the wish expressed that the friend should "attend me on that occasion," followed by the intimation of the necessary dress? This same note runs throughout the whole of the queen's correspondence, as, for example, in a letter written a month after her marriage to the same friend:

"March, 1839.

"I should be very sorry to interfere with your dinner to-morrow, though very greatly regretting not to see you. I said to you the day of my marriage that I hoped you would let Albert see your house some day. It appears to me that before Easter would be pleasanter almost than after, as there are less engagements. Would you, therefore, perhaps receive us some day

either at the end of this month or the beginning of April? I am very well to-day, and none the worse for last night's entertainment. Would you dine with us and accompany me to the opening (of Parliament) on Saturday?"

And again:

"Many thanks for your kind little note received yesterday afternoon. We shall be with you at a little after half-past seven this evening. There is one thing I wish to ask you—which is, if you have invited Lord Melbourne? If you have not invited him, perhaps you would do so, as he would have dined with me had I stayed at home. If he cannot come to dinner, I am sure he will come after. As I shall see him this morning, may I tell him so?"

Two little notes show the queen's feeling and consideration for her friends and her ladies. To a lady of the court who was ill:

"I am very anxious to hear that you have not suffered, and are well this morning. Believe me always,

"Yours most sincerely,

"Victoria R."

And to the same lady: "Are you afraid of going in an open carriage, or would you go out with us at *one*?"

"The christening went off very well," the prince wrote to his father. "The child behaved with great propriety, like a Christian. She was awake, but did not cry at all, and seemed to crow with immense satisfaction at the lights and brilliant uniforms, for she is very intelligent and observant. The ceremony took place at 6.30 P.M., and after it there was a dinner, and then we had some instrumental music. The health of the little one was drunk with great enthusiasm."

The christening of the Princess Royal took a political significance of the utmost value to the queen and the country, for it cemented and gave public assurance of the good relations Prince Albert had cultivated between the Tories and the court. The sponsors chosen for the child were the Duchess of Kent, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg (the prince's father), King Leopold, the Duke of Sussex, the Dowager Queen Adelaide, and the Duchess of Gloucester; but the Duke of Saxe-Coburg was unable to be present, and with the happiest tact the queen asked the Duke of Wellington, the Tory leader in the House of Lords, to represent him. Both the duke and his party

received this distinguished mark of favor with delight; the great soldier had not approved of the queen's marriage, but personal contact with Prince Albert had shown him the wisdom of the queen's choice and he now became the most ardent and sympathetic admirer. Nor did he hesitate to express his feelings, for the queen wrote in her diary, "He is the best friend we have." A few days before the ceremony an accident befell the prince in which the queen again proved her courage. "The cold has been intense," he wrote. "Nevertheless, I managed in skating three days ago to break through the ice in Buckingham Palace gardens. I was making my way to Victoria, who was standing on the bank with one of her ladies, and when within some few yards of the bank, I fell plump into the water, and had to swim for two or three minutes in order to get out. Victoria was the only person with the presence of mind to lend me assistance, her lady being more occupied in screaming for help. The shock from the cold was certainly painful, and I cannot thank Heaven enough that I escaped with nothing more than a severe cold."

Politics again absorbed all the queen's interest and time in the autumn of 1841, a second cabinet crisis arising, which resulted in the resignation

of the Whig ministry. Prince Albert, however, had prepared the way for any possible contingencies, the affair of the Ladies of the Bedchamber having been an object lesson to him—although he was not in the country at that time—as well as to the queen. Some time before the crisis occurred he had been in consultation with Lord Melbourne. "I explained to Lord Melbourne," he wrote, "that I was naturally under some uneasiness—that my chief object was the Queen, and my sole anxiety that nothing unconstitutional should be done; and that the Queen should come out of the crisis this time with more *éclat* than she had done on a previous occasion; that it was my duty, and his also, not only to prepare the Queen for the possible eventuality, but also to come with her to an agreement as to what she, and I, and he would have to do. I showed him the points which I had already communicated to you, and he agreed with me in all of them." This letter proves Prince Albert a great statesman; the election which followed closely upon the crisis showed him a keen observer of the habits of his new countrymen. "The impending Dissolution is now the engrossing topic of interest," he said. "It empties purses, sets families by the ears, demoralizes the lower classes, and perverts many of the upper whose character wants strength to

keep them straight. But this, like other things, comes to an end, and so does not bring the body politic to ruin as it might otherwise do. . . . Yesterday was the last Drawing-room, and all the world is rushing out of town to agitate the country for and against."

The election returned the Tories to power with a large majority. Lord Melbourne, to the queen's great sorrow and the prince's "real grief," resigned office, and Sir Robert Peel was called upon to form a government. This time there was no difficulty; the queen received her new Prime Minister with kindness and distinction. The beautiful Duchess of Sutherland, who was Mistress of the Robes and whose husband was a Whig, was replaced by the Duchess of Buccleuch, whose husband was a Tory; there was no friction upon any point, and the queen's grasp of affairs, her dignity, and consideration roused Peel to express himself to his colleagues in admiring terms. With her characteristic sincerity she made no secret to his successor of her regret in parting with Lord Melbourne; Sir Robert understood the situation, and realized that the queen spoke from a personal and not from a political point of view. Two years before, personal feeling and politics had been confused together in her mind; now her own clear com-

mon sense and Prince Albert's calm judgment had disentangled the two for the rest of her life.

In November, 1841, the queen again became a mother, the Prince of Wales (now King Edward VII) being born on the tenth of the month at Buckingham Palace. This birth of a son and heir to the crown filled the queen and the country with rejoicing, and from the happy mother it called forth a beautiful letter to her uncle, King Leopold: "I wonder very much whom our little boy will be like. You will understand how fervent are my prayers, and I am sure everybody's must be, to see him resemble his father in every respect, both in body and mind. Oh, my dearest uncle, I am sure if you knew how happy, how blessed I feel, and how proud in possessing such a perfect being as my husband! And when you think that you have been instrumental in bringing about this union, it must gladden your heart. We must all have trials and vexations, but if one's home is happy, then the rest is comparatively nothing. I assure you, dear uncle, that no one feels this more than I do. I had this autumn one of the severest trials I could have in parting with my Government, and particularly from our kind and valued friend (Lord Melbourne), and I feel even now this last very much; but my happiness at home with the love

of my husband, his kindness, his advice, his support, and his company, make up for all, and make me forget."

The queen did not express her devotion for her husband in words alone; it was patent to all the court by her actions. Upon one point she was almost morbidly anxious. She had shown before her marriage that she wished her husband to stand upon a public equality with herself; this was not possible, and she was, therefore, all the more desirous that in their private life he should never feel that his wife was the sovereign. The two following anecdotes show the queen's anxiety in this respect:

"The Queen was cold (as, indeed, had long been all her Majesty's loving subjects and servants then with her—the great drawing-room having but one fire burning and few people in it). She said, 'I am sadly cold; I should like the other fire to be lighted.' Then low to me, 'Tell —— to go and ask the Prince if he would like to have the other fire lighted.' Of course, the Prince did like it; but the thing, though small, struck me as a pretty piece of wifeism."

On another occasion: "At bedtime the Queen, evidently much tired and sleepy, won my heart once again by saying to me, 'Tell —— to let the Prince know that it is eleven o'clock (he was

at his everlasting double chess, very deep). Tell him the Prince should *merely* be told the hour. The Prince *wishes* to be told, I know. He does not see the clock.' And quite fussy she seemed for fear of a disrespectful message or anything like a command being sent."

The relator of these two charming instances of the queen's anxiety adds: "It makes me feel more toward the Queen; more of the admiration and wonder which some parts of her character excite; more of the affection which others naturally inspire."

The same lady gives a delightful glimpse of the queen and Prince Albert together in one of the few spare hours their many labors gave them: "The Prince and the Queen are reading Hallam's 'Constitutional History of England' together most carefully, and for a light book 'St. Simon's Memoirs.' Very pleasant to find him reading aloud to her, while she was very deedily at cross-stitch, the other evening before dressing time. Oh! what a blessing it is that 'Love rules the court' as he does. What a *mine* of blessing there is, all sent through those potent blue eyes!" Prince Albert's eyes, like those of the queen, were of a beautiful blue color.

It was, indeed, a happy home, and when the queen, in speaking of the birth of the Prince of

Wales in her speech from the throne at the opening of Parliament in 1842, declared that it was "an event which has completed the measure of my domestic happiness," a thrill of appreciation and loyalty ran through the country. In two years the queen and the prince had raised the throne from the discredit into which it had fallen under George IV to be a shining example of all that was best and highest in married life.

CHAPTER IX

THE QUEEN'S COURAGE

NE of the first domestic duties Prince Albert set himself was to organize the royal household. The custom that obtained under the Georges of rewarding political services with the gift of a place at court, with a salary attached, had resulted in the creation of a number of totally unnecessary posts and sinecures which had come to be regarded as a means of income for the younger sons or *protégés* of influential noblemen or prominent politicians. Ministers when in power did not hesitate to ask for these appointments for their children, knowing that they represented an allowance for life. Horace Walpole is a notable example; throughout the greater part of his dilettante and letter-writing career he drew a salary from a post obtained for him by his father, the first Lord Orford, to which there was no work of any sort attached. Besides these unnecessary posts, there

were many which had survived from the Middle Ages and the days of feudalism, and had become hereditary in certain families, such as the Lord High Verderer and the Lord High Falconer: in all the various departments of the royal household itself there were far too many officials. The result was that the private life of the queen was surrounded by a cumbrous and complicated machinery which could only be set going by the use of much red tape. One department could take no step until another department had arranged certain details; one official could not do this or that, without consulting another official. It was all very dignified and stately, but it was slow, and caused not only endless confusion, but the extravagant expenditure of money. This machinery of the court belonged to the eighteenth century when sovereigns did not take their duties so seriously as did the queen; and to two busy people like herself and Prince Albert it was irksome, since it seriously interfered with their manifold labors.

To make changes in so conservative a body as a royal household called for infinite tact and discretion, but Prince Albert achieved the task with success, and with a grasp of detail that saved a considerable sum of money hitherto wasted to no purpose. " She has most of the toil

and least of the enjoyments of this world," the prince wrote of the queen, and he was determined to spare her every anxiety, no matter how trifling.

Within a few days of the second anniversary of the first attempt upon her life, the queen was again called upon to show her courage. On May 29, 1842, as the queen and prince were driving along the Mall after service at the Chapel Royal, St. James's Palace to Buckingham Palace, the prince saw a man in the crowd step forward and point a pistol directly at him. "He was some two paces from us," the prince wrote. "I heard the trigger snap, but it must have missed fire. I turned to Victoria, who was seated on my right, and asked her, 'Did you hear that?' She had been bowing to the people on the right, and had observed nothing. I said, 'I may be mistaken, but I feel sure I saw some one take aim at us.'" On their arrival at the palace the prince questioned the two footmen who had been at the back of the carriage, but they had not noticed the incident, nor apparently had anyone else, consequently the prince began to think he had made a mistake. But the next morning a boy came to the palace with a curious story. He had seen the man present the pistol, but he did not pull the trigger, exclaiming when the royal carriage passed,

"Fool that I was not to fire!" An elderly gentleman was also a witness of the occurrence. He turned round and said, "This is something too strange." The gentleman walked away and the boy, believing he was going to report the matter to the police, followed him, thinking he might be wanted as a witness. But when the gentleman had gone some little distance he turned round, and seeing the boy, again exclaimed, "This is something too strange," asked his name, age, and address, wrote them down and went away. The next day, however, as the boy had heard nothing, he went to the palace, and Prince Albert's worst fears were confirmed.

"The police showed the greatest activity," wrote the prince. "We were naturally much agitated. Victoria very nervous and unwell. As the doctor wished that she should go out we determined to do so, for we should have had to shut ourselves up for months had we settled not to go out so long as the miscreant was at large. Besides, as he could have no suspicion he was watched, we felt sure he would again come skulking about the place, and that the numerous policemen in plain clothes who were on the lookout for him, would seize him on the least imprudence on his part." The queen and the prince drove out to Hampstead that afternoon, the orders being

given to drive faster than usual and for the two equerries in attendance to ride close to the carriage. "You may imagine our minds were not easy," the prince continues. "We looked behind every tree; and I cast my eyes around in search of the rascal's face." The prince had seen the man so distinctly on the previous day that he had been able to give the police a full description of his appearance. On the return from Hampstead they decided to pass the spot where the prince had seen the man, hoping that if he was there a second time they might effect his arrest. It was courage of the highest order, and there were not lacking those who afterwards thought, and said to the queen, that it was courage carried to the verge of imprudence. The queen's answer was, "She would much rather run the immediate risk at any time than have the presentiment of danger constantly hanging over her."

The man, a carpenter called John Francis, was waiting, and as the carriage passed he fired directly at the queen. "The shot must have passed under the carriage," the prince wrote to Germany, "for he lowered his hand. We felt as if a load had been taken off our hearts, and we thanked the Almighty for having preserved us from so great a danger. John Francis, for that is the man's name, was standing near a police-

man, who immediately seized him, but could not prevent the shot. It was the same spot where Oxford had fired at us two years ago, with this difference only that Oxford was standing on our left with his back to the garden wall."

One of the equerries in attendance said that his horse "being very near to the man, he was disconcerted, and he aimed too low. Her Majesty heard the report, and her extraordinary calmness was wonderful. She was naturally affected, but did not betray the slightest appearance of alarm, but was as calm and collected as when looking at the view at Hampstead. Prince Albert struck me as being very much affected at her Majesty's providential escape."

The queen was very proud of being a "soldier's daughter," as she once publicly described herself at the giving of new colors to a regiment, and on this occasion she proved she had every right to the title. Her bravery excited universal admiration both in England and abroad. "I was not at all frightened," she wrote to King Leopold, "and feel very proud at dear Uncle Mensdorff calling me courageous, which I shall ever remember with delight, coming from so distinguished an officer as he is." When the queen and Prince Albert appeared at the opera on the evening of the attempt, the audience rose *en*

masse, and insisted on the national anthem being played, but unknown to the public there was a circumstance connected with this dastardly outrage which placed her Majesty's courage on a still higher level, and gave proof of her unceasing thought for others.

It was the custom for one of the ladies in waiting to accompany the queen when she went out driving, and on that particular afternoon the duty fell to Lady Bloomfield. To her astonishment, however, she did not receive the usual summons. The queen herself told her the reason:

"I dare say, Georgie, you were surprised at not driving with me this afternoon; but the fact was that, as we returned from church yesterday, a man presented a pistol at the carriage window which flashed in the pan. We were so taken by surprise that he had time to escape, so that I knew what was hanging over me, and I was determined to expose no life but my own."

Nothing was allowed to interfere with the charming home life of the queen and Prince Albert. Many hours of the day were devoted to the duties of the queen's position which increased daily, as under the prince's guidance she took more and more interest in matters of state and in foreign affairs; the nursery, too, claimed much

attention, for the queen superintended every detail of her children's upbringing herself. But time was always found for the music and sketching to which they were both devoted, and as we have already seen, for daily reading aloud. The prince was an accomplished musician and a composer of merit; the queen had a sweet and sympathetic voice, and she and her husband sang together constantly, sometimes to the court. Shortly after their marriage they both sang at a concert, given at Buckingham Palace, with such lights of the opera as Rubini, Lablache, and Costa, the queen singing a duet with Prince Albert. The programme was entirely Italian, the queen's name and Prince Albert's appearing under the following numbers:

QUARTETTO.—"Nobile Signora" (Comte Ory).
Prince Albert, Signor Rubini, Signor B. Costa and Signor Lablache.....*Rossini.*

DUO.—"Non funestar crudele" (Il Disertore).
Her Majesty and Prince Albert.....*Ricci.*

CORO PASTORALE.—"Felice Eta."
Her Majesty, Lady Sandwich, Lady Williamson, Lady Normanby, Lady Norreys, Misses Liddell and Anson. Signor Rubini and Signor Costa. Prince Albert, Lord C. Paget, and Signor Lablache.....*Costa.*

TRIO.—"Dunque il mio bene" (Flauto Magico).
Her Majesty, Signori Rubini and Lablache.....*Mozart.*

QUARTETTO CON CORO.—"Tu di grazia."
Her Majesty, Lady Williamson, Lady Sandwich, Lady Norreys, Lady Normanby, Misses Liddell and Anson. Signor Rubini and Signor Costa. Prince Albert, Lord C. Paget and Signor Lablache.....*Haydn.*

CORO.—"Oh! come lieto giunge" (St. Paul).
Her Majesty, Lady Sandwich, Lady Williamson, Lady Normanby, Lady Norreys, Misses Liddell and Anson. Signor Rubini and Signor Costa. Prince Albert, Lord C. Paget and Signor Lablache.....*Felix Mendelssohn.*

Both the queen and prince had a great admiration for Mendelssohn, and he has left an account of a visit he paid to Buckingham Palace in 1842 which, while showing their keen interest and love for music, gives a valuable glimpse into that delightful atmosphere of easiness, kindness, and consideration which they created around them. Mendelssohn writes:

"Prince Albert had asked me to go to him on Saturday at two o'clock, so that I might try his organ before I left England. I found him alone, and as we were talking away the Queen came in, also alone, in a simple morning dress. She said she was obliged to leave for Claremont in an hour; and then, suddenly interrupting herself, exclaimed, 'But goodness, what a confusion!' for the wind had littered the whole room, and

even the pedals of the organ (which, by the way, made a very pretty feature in the room), with leaves of music from a large portfolio that lay open. As she spoke she knelt down and began picking up the music; Prince Albert helped, and I, too, was not idle. Then Prince Albert proceeded to explain the stops to me, and she said that she meanwhile would put things straight.

"I begged that the Prince would first play me something, so that, as I said, I might boast about it in Germany. He played a chorale by Hentz, with the pedals, so charmingly, so clearly and correctly as would have done credit to any professional, and the Queen having finished her work came and sat by him, and listened, and looked pleased. Then it was my turn, and I began my chorus from *St. Paul,* 'How lovely are the messengers.' Before I got to the end of the first verse they both joined in the chorus, and all the time Prince Albert managed the stops for me so cleverly—first a flute at the forte, the great organ at the D major part of the whole, then he made a lovely diminuendo with the stops, and so on to the end of the piece, and all by heart—that I was really quite enchanted. Then the young Prince of Gotha came in, and there was more chatting; and the Queen asked if I had written any new songs, and said she was very fond of singing

my published songs. 'You should sing one to him,' said Prince Albert; and after a little begging she said she would try the 'Frühlingslied' in B flat. 'If it is still here,' she added, 'for all my music is packed up for Claremont.' Prince Albert went to look for it, and came back saying it was already packed. 'But one might perhaps unpack it,' said I. 'We must send for Lady ——,' she said (I did not catch the name). So the bell was rung, and the servants were sent after it without success. At last the Queen went herself, and while she was gone Prince Albert said to me, 'She begs you will accept this present as a remembrance,' and gave me a little case with a beautiful ring, on which is engraved 'V. R. 1842.' Then the Queen came back and said: 'Lady —— has gone, and has taken all my things with her. It is really most annoying.' (You can't think how that amused me.) I then begged that I might not be made to suffer for the accident, and hoped she would sing another song. After some consultation with her husband he said, 'She will sing you something of Gluck's.' Meantime the Princess of Gotha had come in, and we five proceeded through various corridors and rooms to the Queen's sitting room, where there was a piano. The Duchess of Kent came in, and while they were all talking, I rummaged

about among the music, and soon discovered my first set of songs; so, of course, I begged her rather to sing one of those than the Gluck, to which she kindly consented. And which should she chose?—'Schöner und schöner schmückt sich.' Sang it quite charmingly in strict time and tune, and with very good execution. Then I was obliged to confess that Fanny [1] had written the song, which I found very hard, but pride must have a fall—and begged her to sing one of my own also. If I could give her plenty of help she would gladly try, she said; and then she sang the 'Pilger's Spruch,' and 'Lass dich Nur,' really quite faultlessly, and with charming feeling and expression. I thought to myself one must not pay too many compliments on such an occasion, so that I merely thanked her a great many times, upon which she said, 'Oh, if I only had not been so frightened; generally I have such long breath.' Then I praised her heartily, and with the best conscience in the world. Just that part with the long G at the close she had done so well, taking the three following and connecting notes in the same breath as one seldom hears it done, and therefore it amused me doubly that she herself should have begun about it.

"After this Prince Albert sang the Aerndte-

[1] Mendelssohn's sister.

lied, 'Es ist ein Schnitter'; and then he said I must improvise something before I went, and gave me as themes the chorale which he had played on the organ and the song which he had just sung. If everything had gone as usual, I ought to have improvised most dreadfully badly, for it is almost always like that with me when I want it to go well; and then I should have gone away vexed with the whole morning. But just as if I was to keep nothing but the pleasantest, most charming recollections of it, I never improvised better. I was in the best mood for it, and enjoyed it myself, so that between the two themes I brought in the two songs which the queen had sung, naturally enough. It went off so easily that I would gladly not have stopped. They followed me with so much intelligence and attention that I felt more at ease than I ever did in improvising to an audience. She said several times she hoped I would soon come to England again and pay them a visit. And then I took leave; and down below I saw the beautiful carriages waiting, with their scarlet outriders, and in a quarter of an hour the flag was lowered and the Court Circular announced, 'Her Majesty left the Palace at twenty minutes past three.'"

The queen admired her husband's talents as a composer as much as his other gifts. One night

at Buckingham Palace a new piece of music was played by the band; everybody was much impressed, but no one knew the author. The queen, who was in the secret, was delighted, and said to one of her ladies, "in a low voice and with a great blush, 'Don't you like that? It is composed by the Prince.'" The same lady gives unconsciously a companion picture to this expression of the wife's adoration for the husband betokened by the "great blush," in a little incident she witnessed while the queen was sitting for one of the many portraits painted of her. "Yesterday," she said, "I was so struck with the Prince's manner; he came into the painting room from shooting, his hair all blown about and color heightened, looking so handsome! And the way in which he bounded up to her as she sat on her high *fauteuil*, and took her hand with the most graceful, charming bow."

The prince's interests were most varied—music, botany, agriculture, art in every form—and where he led, the queen followed happily and with enthusiasm. At this distance of time it is possible to judge Prince Albert's influence from a proper standpoint, the standpoint of the knowledge of the effect of his influence. In his lifetime he was never accorded the appreciation which was justly his due from the English people,

a fact of which the queen herself was not ignorant, and which made the only cloud upon her married happiness. There were moments when with the great loyalty and frankness of her nature she could not repress her feelings on the matter in the entries she made in her journals, and in speaking to devoted and intimate friends. Politics and insularity were the actual causes, not of the prince's unpopularity—the word is too strong to describe the actual situation—but rather of an attitude of doubt and questioning, and that curious bent in the human mind, especially in the English human mind, which sets the tongue belittling men who have made what is called a "good marriage." A man in England, whatever his degree, who marries a wife who is richer and of a higher position than himself, is always open to the *dénigrement* to which Prince Albert was publicly subjected because of his exalted station. Then the misjudged wrangle between Whigs and Tories over the question of his precedence and allowance, had left an impression on the public mind, an impression which, although it grew fainter with the passage of years, found unjust expression from time to time.

Both by reason of his training and his cast of mind, Prince Albert was entirely out of sympathy with the two classes which then influenced public

opinion in England—the aristocracy and the country gentlemen. Their point of view was so narrow and prejudiced that it was almost part of their belief to despise foreigners; the majority judged a man entirely by his love of sport. They regarded intellectual pursuits with suspicion, especially in a prince, and one of the first reproaches they brought against Prince Albert was that he did not ride on horseback in the English fashion, but in the German! The prince, on his side, viewed with amazement the spectacle of great landowners neglecting their duties for the pursuit of pleasure; whilst they could not understand how a man who, by virtue of his position could have led the racing world and the world of sport, was content to act as private secretary to his wife, and interest himself in philanthropy, in the education of the people, and in the encouragement of a love and understanding of art throughout the country. The prince from the outset was judged by an entirely wrong standard, and those who so judged him were the very men whose lack of intellectuality and of those high aims, which were his inspiration, gave them the least right to form an opinion. They could only judge from what they saw—a grave dignity in public which they called " stiffness," and a German seat on horseback which they called " foreign." Of

the man's character they knew nothing, nor did they seek to know. He was a "foreigner," and to their British minds that summed up the whole matter—and against the prince. Indeed, there were few people, except the ministers and the court *entourage*, who were aware of the full measure of his unselfishness and self-sacrifice, but he had the consolation of knowing that the queen appreciated it to the utmost. Sir Theodore Martin in his "Life of the Prince Consort" speaks very clearly on this point. "The Prince knew, as General Grey [1] said, that no shadow of a shade of suspicion should ever by any possibility attach to his own conduct. It must be absolutely free from reproach. It was his duty to lay down severe rules for his own guidance, involving restraint and self-denial. He denied himself the pleasure of walking at will about London. Wherever he went, whether in a carriage or on horseback, he was accompanied by his equerry. He paid no visits in general society. His visits were to the studios of artists, to museums of art or science, to institutions for benevolent purposes. Scandal itself could take no liberty with his name. He would frequently return to luncheon, the Queen says, at a great pace on horseback, and would always go to the Queen's

[1] Equerry to Prince Albert.

dressing room, where she generally was at that time, with that bright, loving smile with which he ever greeted her, telling her where he had been, of what new building he had seen, what studios he had visited. She was anxious to prevent his being besieged when in London by many unnecessary people. 'His health is so valuable, not only to me, to whom he is more than all in all, but to this whole country, that we must do our duty, and manage that he is not overwhelmed with people.'"

CHAPTER X

THE MAKING OF A HOME

HE rapid increase of the queen's family occupied much of her time and thought, but there was no cessation in her devotion to the public business, which grew more and more complicated during the twenty years between 1840 and 1860. Nine children were born to the queen and Prince Albert, four sons and five daughters, the Princess Royal (afterwards Crown Princess of Prussia and Empress Frederick), on November 21, 1840; the Prince of Wales (now King Edward VII), on November 9, 1841; the Princess Alice (afterwards Grand Duchess of Hesse), on April 25, 1843; Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh (afterwards Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha), August 6, 1844; the Princess Helena (now Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein), May 25, 1846; the Princess Louise (now Duchess of Argyll), March 18, 1848; Prince Arthur (now Duke of

Connaught), May 1, 1850; Prince Leopold (afterwards Duke of Albany), April 7, 1853, and the Princess Beatrice (now Princess Henry of Battenberg), on April 14, 1857. The training of their children occupied their greatest care, father and mother being of the same opinion that "they should be brought up as simply, naturally, and domestically as possible, and that no obsequious deference should be paid to their rank," the queen devoting all the time that she could spare from her duties to their society. She joined in their games and taught them new ones, she made their interests her own, and, remembering the "dullness" of her own childhood, encouraged friendships between them and the children of the aristocracy. As the sons grew older and it became necessary to prepare them for the careers they were to follow—the Prince of Wales for his present exalted station as king, the Duke of Edinburgh for the navy and the Duke of Connaught for the army—Prince Albert was responsible for the methods followed; the queen herself definitely stated this, and added "that public commendation of herself on this score caused her pain." In the case of the princesses she took the responsibility Prince Albert had taken for their sons, and they were trained with the greatest care, not only in accom-

plishments but in domestic matters also; from the earliest age it was impressed upon sons and daughters alike, that the first claim of their high station was obedience to duty; and as a result of that training the English royal family stands alone among the royal families of Europe in its practical participation in the social and philanthropic interests of its country.

The queen was a close and shrewd observer of the trend of thought in the country, and set an example of not bringing up her daughters as if marriage was to be the only object of their existence. Her opinion on the subject is echoed in a letter from Princess Alice some years after her marriage to Prince Louis of Hesse, afterwards Grand Duke of Hesse.

"My best thanks for your dear letter of the 13th," the princess wrote to the queen. "You say rightly, what a fault it is of parents to bring up their daughters with the main object of marrying them. This is said to be a too prominent feature in the modern English education of the higher classes. I want to strive to bring up the girls without seeking this as the sole object for the future—to feel they can fill up their lives so well otherwise. A marriage for the sake of marriage is surely the greatest mistake a woman can make. I know what an absorbing feeling that

ALBERT EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES, AT SEVEN YEARS OF AGE.

From a painting by Winterhalter.

of devotion to one's parents is. When I was at home it filled my whole soul. It does still in a great degree, and Heimweh [1] does not cease after ever so long an absence."

Prince Albert was passionately devoted to a country life, but the royal residences were all so near London that, except at Windsor, he had no opportunity of indulging in his favorite pursuits, which in time also became the favorite pursuits of the queen. He also loved a quietude which it was impossible to get either in London or at Windsor. Shortly after the birth of the Prince of Wales, the queen and the prince had gone to the Pavilion at Brighton, a monstrosity of architecture on which George IV had squandered thousands of pounds of the public money. The palace, built in imitation of a Chinese pagoda, stands in the middle of the town, and the royal pair were so overwhelmed by the loyal attention and interest of the townspeople that they were scarcely safe from peeping eyes in their sitting room. Both naturally conceived a dislike to the place, and the queen, who was anxious to have a home which was her own property and entirely separate from the palaces which go with the crown, decided to buy Osborne Lodge and its estate of about eight hundred acres, near Cowes

[1] Homesickness.

in the Isle of Wight. She had stayed at Osborne Cottage with her mother in 1833, and had always retained a lively recollection of the charms of the place. The old house was pulled down and a new one built in the designing of which, and in the laying out of the gardens round it, Prince Albert was keenly interested; the queen and he spent many happy hours in its arrangement and in the discussion of plans. The foundation stone of the new house was laid on June 23, 1845, and one part of the building was sufficiently advanced for the royal family to go there the following year. Lady Lyttleton, who was governess to the royal children, thus describes the first night there: "Our first night in this house is well passed. Nobody complained of the smell of paint or caught cold, and the worst is over. Everything in the house is quite new, and the drawing-room looks very handsome. The lights of the lamps in the windows in this room must have been seen far out at sea. At dinner we were to drink the Queen and the Prince's health as a housewarming, and after it the Prince said, very simply and seriously, 'We have a psalm in Germany for such occasions,' and then quoted it. It was 'to bless our going out and our coming in, our daily bread and all we do; bless us to a blessed dying, and make us heirs

of heaven.' It was dry and quaint, being Luther's. We all perceived that he was feeling it, and truly the entering of a new house is a solemn thing to do to those whose space of life in it is possibly not long, and who, in spite of rank, and health and youth, may be going downhill now.

"I forgot the best part of our breaking in, which was that Lucy Kerr insisted on throwing an old shoe into the house after the Queen as she entered for the first night, this being a Scottish superstition. She wanted also to have some melted lead, and other sundry charms, but they were not forthcoming."

Neither the queen nor Prince Albert had an intention of building a palace at Osborne; it was to be a house for rest and quiet, and for the tranquil home life which they both loved. It was also to serve as a center for the fulfillment of the queen's many duties to the navy, the great naval center, Portsmouth, being on the other side of the water, and within three quarters of an hour's journey. The original plan, however, proved too inadequate, the queen finding the house all too small for the many claims upon her hospitality and for the state business she was obliged to transact there; and although they were in residence constantly after the completion of the first

portion in 1846, it was not until 1851 that the work was ended. The new Osborne House was built about a quarter of a mile from the shore toward the top of an ascending valley, thus giving from its windows a beautiful view of sloping hills, covered with trees, descending to a little bay, with the Hampshire coast in the distance, and the blue waters of the Solent in between. Two great terraces were built across the valley; above the terraces is the house which has the appearance of a great Italian villa. Two massive square towers flank it at either end, the main part of the building being three stories in height. Over the second story is an open colonnade joining a corridor leading to a separate building in which were the queen and Prince Albert's private apartments. The queen's own rooms looked to the south, and directly down upon the first terrace with its fountains and gay riot of flowers; her sitting room, with a large bow window, commanded a wide view of the sea with the sloping woods and the terraces of her grounds. Everywhere there were evidences of Prince Albert's taste; he planted the avenue of ilex which stretches from the house to one of the entrance lodges, and it was he who planned the shrubberies with their wealth of arbutus, and planted the pines and other evergreen trees which give

Osborne a wealth of green even in the depths of winter.

The value of evergreen trees was then little understood in England, even pines being comparatively rare in the south of England, but, with so temperate a climate as that of the Isle of Wight, it was possible to introduce not only ilex and arbutus, but also myrtle, and Prince Albert may be said to have led the way to the general introduction of non-deciduous trees in parks and gardens throughout the country. He was keenly interested in arboriculture, a necessary science then greatly neglected in England, where the planting of new trees was not in proportion to the annual quantity cut down. The love of nature and of gardens was not considered fashionable in the queen's young days. The sham classicism of the eighteenth century still prevailed, but under Prince Albert's example fashion changed, and from the laying out of the grounds at Osborne dates the beginning of that widespread interest in flowers, and all that appertains to the garden, that has now permeated through every class, and is one of the features of English life which the historian of the future will have to take into account. The prince found the queen a willing pupil. "The Queen is learning trees and plants," a lady wrote soon after their mar-

riage, " and in a very pretty, childlike manner, when last we walked, told me quite gravely and low, half shy ' That —— is a tulip tree; you see, a rare tree, but yet hardy. We hope it may succeed, though very large to be transplanted.' Last year she did not know an elm from an oak. ' Love rules the court, the camp, the grove.' "

It was in 1842 that the queen, accompanied by Prince Albert, paid her first visit to Scotland, performing the journey by sea, and it was then that she fell in love with that part of her dominions, especially with the Highlands where the scenery instantly appealed to her and Prince Albert, and whose bracing air she found of great benefit to her health. The prince became a keen deerstalker during this and subsequent visits, and it was as much to afford him this pleasure and relaxation, as to gratify her own desire for a place " where a complete contrast from state and ceremony could be secured in the autumn," that the queen decided upon taking a house in the Highlands. Balmoral was the outcome of this desire, the queen renting it from Sir Robert Gordon in September, 1848, for three weeks. They went by sea to Aberdeen, where they were accorded an enthusiastic reception, and thence by road to Balmoral under triumphal arches, and, as night came on, between rows of Highlanders

holding torches. Bonfires blazed on all the hills around; it was a characteristic Highland welcome which the queen never forgot.

"It was the first experience of many happy days," says the Duke of Argyll, "and many happy years spent among the beautiful mountains of Aberdeen, in the keen and healthy air that blew from the peaks of Lochnagar, over the fine forest of Balloch Buie and Mar. The fine and peculiar coloring of the landscape was especially pleasing. The more level ground near the impetuous river was still clothed, despite the autumn, in green. Then came near the edges of the woods, the bright russet of the fern, lining the dark verdure of the Scotch firs, which rose ridge above ridge until they became scanty and widespread, while the purple glow of the heather was still in full flower, to be succeeded on the higher ranges by the cold escarpments of the gray granite rock. There was already snow upon the highest hills, the cloud-capped backs of Drim Alban, as the backbone of Scotland is called in the ancient Gallic tongue, being 4,000 feet in height, and containing corners and glens so hidden from the sun that summer could not wholly dissipate the snow. These heights were the haunt of the ptarmigan, the bird which, though gray in the summer time, becomes white

in the winter, and which enjoys the barren and stony ground where its curious rattling note may often be heard. Of grouse it was found that the numbers were not great, but the deer were very numerous."

The queen was in ecstasies of delight with the freedom and simplicity of their life at Balmoral. "It is a pretty little castle," she wrote, "in the old Scottish style. There is a picturesque tower and garden in front with a high wooded hill. There is a nice little hall with a billiard room; next to it is the dining room. Upstairs immediately to the right is our sitting room, a fine large room; then our bedroom, opening into it a little dressing room, which is Albert's. Opposite down a few steps are the children's, and Miss Hilyard's three rooms. The ladies lived below, and the gentlemen upstairs. (The queen had taken only a small suite, two ladies and two gentlemen.) After lunch we walked out and went to the top of the wooded hill opposite our windows, where there is a cairn, and up which there is a pretty winding path. The view from here is charming. To the left the beautiful hills surrounding Lochnagar; to the right the glen along which the Dee winds, and the wooded hills which reminded one very much of the Thüringerwald. It was so calm and so solitary. It

did one good as one gazed around; the pure mountain air was most refreshing. All seemed to breathe freedom and peace, and to make one forget the world and its sad turmoils. The scenery is wild, and yet not desolate, and everything looks much more prosperous and cultivated than at Laggan. Then the soil is delightfully dry. We walked beside the beautiful rapid Dee, which is close behind the house. The view of the hills toward Invercauld is exceedingly fine. When I came in at half past six, Albert went out to try his luck with some stags."

One day the queen herself joined the prince in his pastime. "Several gillies were with us," she wrote. "They took us up a beautiful path winding through trees and heather in the Balloch Buie, but when we had gone about a mile they discovered deer. A 'council of war' was held in a whisper, and we turned back and went the whole way down again, and rode along to the keeper's lodge, where we turned up the glen immediately below Craig Daign, through a beautiful part of the wood, and went along the track till we came to the foot of the craig, where we all dismounted. We scrambled up an almost perpendicular place to where there was a little box made of hurdles and interwoven with branches of fir and heather about five feet in

height, where we seated ourselves with Bertie (the Prince of Wales), Macdonald lying in the heather near us and quite concealed. Some had gone round to beat, and others, again, were at a little distance. We sat quite still and sketched a little, I doing the landscape and some trees, Albert drawing Macdonald as he lay there. This lasted for nearly an hour, when Albert fancied he heard a distant sound, and in a few minutes Macdonald whispered that he saw stags, and that Albert should wait and take a steady aim. We then heard them coming past."

For four years the visits were repeated each autumn when the queen bought the property, and husband and wife were again busy with plans and the builders, the house being too small for their needs. From the queen's own account we see there were only two sitting rooms beside the one occupied by herself and Prince Albert, and one of these was the billiard room. The space was so confined that the queen, who was generally a spectator of the game, was obliged frequently to move from chair to chair in order to avoid being hit by the cues of the players. Balmoral never grew to the size of Osborne, and to the end was considered too small by some of the *entourage* for the lengthened residences the queen made there. But she loved the place, and

THE NURSERY, OSBORNE.

she was able to indulge there and at Osborne, a delight which was impossible at Windsor, that is, of visiting the cottages round about, and also such of the neighbors who were known to her, without ceremony. She delighted in being a country squire's wife, and both in the Highlands and at Osborne she could walk about alone, run in and out of the cottages, and forget all the trammels of state which hedged her in when she was at Windsor or in London. On one occasion the queen and Prince Albert, in the course of an afternoon walk at Osborne, called on a lady who lived near. The lady was out and the queen was "extravagantly delighted," when the footman, not recognizing the royal visitors, asked them if they "would leave their names." Her preference for these two places was shown as early as 1849, when she wrote to a friend early in October from Windsor, "Windsor is in great beauty but we rather miss the air and liberty of Osborne, and very often think of the *dear* Highlands."

The first ten years of the queen's marriage were filled with so many cares and duties outside those of her home life, that her desire for a place of comparative retirement is easily understood. Seven of her children were born during this period, she had made state tours in Scotland and Ireland and in many parts of England, and in

addition had paid visits to Louis Philippe, the King of the French, to her uncle, King Leopold of Belgium, and to Germany, where after being the guests of the King of Prussia, she and Prince Albert went to Coburg in order that the queen might satisfy a long-cherished desire of becoming acquainted with the scenes of her mother and husband's childhood and youth. "I am enchanted with Germany," she wrote on her return in September, 1845, to her aunt, the Duchess of Gloucester, "and in particular with dear Coburg and Gotha, which I left with the very greatest regret. The realization of this delightful visit, which I had wished for so many years will be a constant and lasting satisfaction." In her journal the queen thus describes their entry into her husband's native country:

"At length we saw flags and the people drawn up in lines, and in a few minutes we were welcomed by Ernest (Duke of Coburg[1]) in full uniform. We got into an open carriage of Ernest's, with six horses, Ernest being opposite to us. The good people were all dressed in their best, the women in pointed caps and many petticoats, and the men in yellow breeches. Many girls were there with wreaths of flowers; and at

[1] The father of Prince Albert had died in 1844, and his brother Ernest had succeeded him.

Ketchendorf we found Uncle Leopold. Then the procession was formed. At the entrance to the town there was a triumphal arch where the burgomaster addressed us, and was quite overcome. On the other side stood a number of girls dressed in white, with green wreaths and scarfs, who presented us with bouquets and verses. I cannot say how much I felt moved on entering this dear old place, and with difficulty I restrained my emotion. The beautifully ornamented town, the numbers of good people, the many recollections connected with the place—all were so affecting. In the Platz where are the townhall and government house—fine, curious old houses—the clergy were assembled." When they arrived at the palace the queen found "the staircase full of cousins," waiting to greet her. But her greatest delight was in the country house where Prince Albert was born. "How happy, how joyful, we were on awaking," she writes, "to feel ourselves here at the Rosenau, my Albert's birthplace, the place he most loves. He was so happy to be here with me; it was like a beautiful dream. Before breakfast we went upstairs where he and Ernest used to live, which is quite in the roof, with a tiny bedroom on each side, in one of which they both used to sleep. The view is beautiful. The paper of the room

is still full of holes from their fencing, and the same table is there on which they were dressed when little." On their way to Coburg they went to Bonn where Prince Albert had been a student at the university, and in the few words noting the visit, the queen, as on so many occasions in her letters and journals, shows, and without intention, that she regarded her husband as the person of the first importance, herself as the second. "We went by rail to Bonn. We drove to the house of Prince Furstenberg. Many gentlemen connected with the university, who had known Albert, were there, and delighted to see him and pleased to see me."

The queen's visit to France was of great importance since it marked a great change in the position of the sovereign, for up to that time the monarch had not been allowed to leave the kingdom without the consent of Parliament and without appointing a regent to govern the country during his absence. Nearly a hundred years had elapsed since a sovereign had gone abroad, and there was much discussion as to whether such a regency should not be appointed in this instance. There was much searching of precedents, and the crown lawyers having been consulted decided that, having regard to the increased facilities of communication a regency

was no longer necessary during the absence of the sovereign. A tiresome "restriction of her personal liberty" was thus avoided, and the queen was the first English sovereign who left her kingdom at her pleasure, and for as long as she pleased. Personally the visit was of great interest to herself as it was the first time she had been abroad; and historically it marked the beginning of a better understanding between England and France, this being the first visit paid by an English sovereign to a French sovereign since Henry VIII and Francis I met on the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

In addition to these progresses and visits, the queen had entertained foreign potentates, and kept up a brilliant court during the London season, all the while she was being harassed by serious political complications in England. In the early forties there was a potato famine in Ireland, while in England the price of bread rose to such starvation prices that she was obliged to restrict the allowance of her own household. It was pointed out to her that court entertainments encouraged trade and to this end she gave one of the most famous balls of her reign. The distress among the Spitalfields silk weavers in 1842 became so acute that many of them were actually starving. In order to help them the

queen gave a fancy-dress ball at Buckingham Palace in which all the costumes were to be of the Plantagenet period, at the same time causing it to be made known that she desired all her guests to wear dresses of Spitalfields silk. This colony of silk weavers had been established at Spitalfields—a district in the East End of London—by Huguenot refugees from Lyons, who, driven out of France by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV, had come to England and set up their looms; it was they who introduced the weaving of silk into England. The introduction of machinery, however, owing to the discovery of steam, and its application to weaving, practically ruined the descendants of the Huguenot refugees, but the queen's timely aid saved them and set the fashion for wearing hand-made silk.

At this famous Plantagenet ball the queen appeared as Queen Philippa, wife of Edward III, and the prince as that monarch. A life-size marble group, which now stands in the corridor at Windsor Castle, was afterwards made of the husband and wife in these costumes, in which the queen looks appealingly to the prince and holds his hand. After his death she had inscribed upon the base the words, "Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

Among the foreign sovereigns who visited the queen were two with whose families her own was afterwards allied by marriage—the King of Prussia, whose nephew married the Princess Royal, the Emperor Nicholas of Russia, whose granddaughter married Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, and afterwards Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. There is a vivid perception of character in the queen's account of this last visit, as well as a charming simplicity; the queen's pen, unconsciously to herself, was the best delineator of her own character. She had a great fear of exaggeration, and on one occasion after describing an illness, the news of which she had received in a letter, and seeing how great a shock it caused to the lady to whom she was talking, she said, "Oh, but perhaps I am overstating what was in the letter! Where is it? Oh! in the Prince's room; I'll go and get it," and she ran all along the private corridor to the Prince's room to fetch the letter." Of this trait of the queen's character the same lady on another occasion said: "There is a transparency in her truth that is very striking. Not a shade of exaggeration in describing feelings or facts; like very few people I ever knew. Many may be as true, but I think it often goes along with reserve. She talks all out and just as it is, no more and

no less." This testimony would give an added value to the queen's descriptions of events and people were it not that they bear in themselves unmistakable signs of being "just as it is, no more and no less."

"A great event," the queen wrote of the Emperor Nicholas's visit to Windsor, "and a great compliment his visit certainly is. The people here are extremely flattered by it. He is certainly a very striking man, still very handsome. His profile is beautiful, and his manners most dignified and graceful; extremely civil. The expression of the eyes is severe, and unlike anything I ever saw before. He gives Albert and myself the impression of a man who is not happy, and on whom the burden of his immense power and position weigh heavily and painfully. He seldom smiles; and when he does the expression is not a happy one. He is very easy to get on with. Both the Emperor and the King of Saxony (who was paying a family visit at the same time) are quite enchanted with Windsor. The Emperor said, very politely, 'It is worthy of you, madam.' The Emperor praised my Albert very much, saying, 'It is impossible to see a better-looking man. He has so noble and good an air.' He amused the King of Saxony and me by saying he was so embarrassed

when people were presented to him, as he felt so awkward in a frock coat, which he is certainly not accustomed to wear. Military uniform had become so habitual to him, and without it he said he felt as if one had skinned him. The review on June 5th was really very interesting, and our reception, as well as that of the Emperor, most enthusiastic. The Emperor asked my leave to ride down the line. When he came back he thanked me warmly for having allowed him to see his 'old comrades.'

"On the 6th we went with the Emperor and King to the races, and I never saw such a crowd. Here again, the reception was most brilliant. Every evening a large dinner in the Waterloo Room, on the two last evenings in uniform, as the Emperor disliked so being in evening dress, and was quite embarrassed in it.

"On the 7th we brought him and the King here (Buckingham Palace) and in the evening had a party of about 260. On his return from the *fête* at Chiswick (given by the then Duke of Devonshire) on the 8th, the Emperor talked of it at dinner with delight; how brilliant it had been, of the great numbers of beautiful women present. He had seen Lord Melbourne there, and when I spoke of Lord Melbourne, and of the respect he entertained for the Emperor, he

replied by expressing his great esteem for Lord Melbourne, adding, 'All who serve your Majesty well are dear to me.' As he led me from the dining room, he said: 'It is unfortunately the last evening that I can enjoy the kindness of your Majesty, but the recollection will be eternally graven on my heart. I shall probably not see you again'; to which I replied he could easily come here again. He said: 'You do not know how difficult it is for us to do such things, but I commend my children to you.' He said this sadly.

"On the evening of the 8th we went to the Opera, not in State, but they recognized us. We were most brilliantly received. I had to force the Emperor forward, as he never would come forward when I was there, and I was obliged to take him by the hand and make him appear. It was impossible to be more respectful than he was to me. On Sunday afternoon he left us. Albert accompanied him to Woolwich. He was much affected at going, and really unaffectedly touched at his reception and stay, the simplicity and quietness of which told upon his love of domestic life, which is very great. On the morning he was to leave he expressed his gratitude to us in very warm tones and said: 'I leave with sentiments of the most profound de-

votion to your Majesty and to him (taking Albert's hand) who has been like a brother to me.' At a little before five o'clock we went down to wait in the small drawing-room with the children. Not long after the Emperor came and spoke to them, and then, with a sigh and much emotion, which took all the harshness of his countenance away, he said, 'I take my departure from here, madam, with a full heart. I am touched by your kindness to me. You may be sure, madam, that you may count upon me at all times as your most devoted servant. May God bless you.' And again he kissed my hand and pressed it, and I kissed him (sovereigns invariably kiss one another at the beginning and end of a state visit; it is royal etiquette). He kissed the children most affectionately, saying, 'May God bless them for your happiness.'

"He wanted me not to go farther with him, saying, 'I beseech you, do not accompany me farther,' but of course I would not consent, and took his arm to go to the hall. At the top of the few steps leading to the lower hall, he again took most kindly leave. When I saw him at the door I went down the steps, and, from the carriage, he begged I would not stand there; but I did and saw him drive off with Albert for Woolwich.

"I will now give you my opinions and feelings on the subject. I was extremely against the visit, fearing the constraint and the bustle, and even, at first, I did not feel at all to like it, but by living in the same house together, quietly and unrestrainedly (and this Albert says, with great truth, is the great advantage of these visits, for I not only see these great people, but know them) I got to know the Emperor, and he to know me.

"There is much about him I cannot help liking, and I think his character is one which should be understood and looked upon for once as it is. He is stern and severe, with strict principles of duty, which nothing on earth will make him change. Very clever I do not think him, and his mind is not a cultivated one. His education has been neglected; politics and military concerns are the only things he takes great interest in. The arts, and all the softer occupations, he does not care for. But he is sincere, I am certain—sincere even in his most despotic acts, from a sense that it is the only way to govern. He is not, I am sure, aware of the dreadful cases of individual misery which he so often causes, for I can see, by various instances, that he is kept in much ignorance of many things which his people carry out in most corrupt ways, while he thinks he is extremely just. He thinks of

general measures, but does not look into details, and I am sure much never reaches his ears. As you observe, how can it? He asked for nothing whatever, and merely expressed his great anxiety to be on the best of terms with us, but not to the exclusion of others; only let things remain as they are."

Another royal visitor was the King of Hanover, the former Duke of Cumberland, whom the queen, in spite of his avowed unfriendliness to her, asked to be godfather to her third child, the Princess Alice. Only two of her uncles then were living, the king and the Duke of Cambridge; it was, therefore, the kindliest family sentiment that prompted the queen to attempt to draw him within the circle, and to show that she bore no resentment for the past. King Ernest's behavior was characteristic. The christening of Princess Alice was fixed for June 5, 1843, but he arrived several days too late for the ceremony, and, so it was believed, purposely. Besides the christening a marriage in the royal family, that of the Princess Augusta, daughter of the Duke of Cambridge, to the Hereditary Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, gave the queen an occasion, in which she always delighted, of gathering all the members of the family round her. The King of Hanover rewarded the con-

ciliatory spirit that had included him in the party by a deliberate attempt to slight Prince Albert. He still regarded his niece as having deprived him of a throne, and her marriage having disposed of his absurd claim he did not regard the prince with a friendly eye. At the time when the question of the prince's precedence had been before Parliament, King Ernest had roundly declared that he would not give the *pas* to a "paper royal highness": he endeavored to make good his threat at this wedding. After the ceremony at Buckingham Palace, when the register was to be signed, he "furtively" moved into a position next to the queen, in order that he might sign his name immediately after she had written hers, and before Prince Albert. In an instant the queen grasped his intention, and quietly moving to the place on the other side of the table where Prince Albert was standing, she caused the register to be passed to her, signed it, and then gave the pen to her husband, before her uncle could move. But although she prevented the open slight, the queen none the less resented it, and showed her feelings by giving her other uncle, King Leopold of Belgium, precedence of the King of Hanover at court, which was a sufficient indication to a man who attached such importance to his position as

the former Duke of Cumberland. The queen, it is said, uncertain how she could explain this public lowering by a step in rank of her ill-conditioned uncle of Hanover, asked the advice of the Duke of Wellington before putting it into effect; he suggested that she was quite within her rights to follow the arrangement made at the Congress of Vienna, where the representatives of the various nations gathered to settle the peace of Europe after the Napoleonic upheaval, had taken the precedence of the first letter in the alphabet of their country. "B. (Belgium) comes before H. (Hanover)," the duke added with characteristic point and brevity.

Apart from the political cares of this decade, and the anxiety caused by the excitement aroused throughout the country by the Chartist riots and the introduction of free trade, the queen had been gravely troubled by a foreign complication which has passed into history under the name of "The Spanish Marriages." The throne of Spain was then occupied by Queen Isabella, a girl of sixteen, still under the regency of her mother, Queen Christina. It was well known in England that King Louis Philippe was anxious to marry one of his sons to the young queen in order to bring Spain under French influence, and from an international

point of view this arrangement was considered most undesirable by the leaders of both political parties in England. Louis Philippe was speedily made aware of this English opinion. He declared that the marriage of Queen Isabella was no affair of his, at the same time announcing the betrothal of his son, the Duc de Montpensier, to the queen's younger sister. Lord Aberdeen was then the English Foreign Minister; both he and the queen saw no objection to this marriage; but Lord Aberdeen stipulated that it should not take place until the Queen of Spain had married and borne a child, and that it was clearly to be understood that "no member of the French Bourbon house should become the royal consort of Spain." Louis Philippe agreed to these conditions, and on the two occasions when Queen Victoria visited him at the Chateau d'Eu he gave her his personal assurance that they should be fulfilled. Unfortunately the Regent of Spain, Queen Christina, interposed, and brought England and France to the verge of war. She detested the French and had no wish to see their influence established in Spain. With a view therefore of counteracting the effect of the marriage of her second daughter, she advised the young queen to follow the example of the Queen of England, and the Queen of Portugal, and

choose her husband from the House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Prince Albert's brother, Duke Ernest, was suggested, but when he married in 1842, the regent chose Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, the brother of the consort of the Queen of Portugal, and first cousin to Prince Albert. So far as the queen and Prince Albert were concerned the question immediately became one of family, and no longer a matter of state. They could not possibly suggest that English ministers should support the interests of a kinsman of their own when England had protested against one of the French king's sons; they, therefore, took no more personal part in the affair and left it entirely to the ministers. In France feeling ran high against Queen Christina's suggestion, and the Prime Minister, Guizot, openly declared "that he would at all hazards preserve Spain from England's and Portugal's fate of a Saxe-Coburg ruler"; the tension became acute and at the suggestion of the English ministers Prince Leopold's suit was withdrawn.

But in 1846 Queen Christina again revived the question, but secretly, writing to Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg begging him to seek the personal aid of Queen Victoria in bringing about the marriage with Prince Leopold. The queen took no

steps, either one way or the other, but when her uncle, King Leopold, and the Duke Ernest came to England in the following August, the matter was discussed in all its bearings, it being finally decided that as Prince Leopold had been rejected as a consort for Queen Isabella both by the English and French ministers, his family could not support his suit, the desire of Queen Christina notwithstanding. The Duke of Saxe-Coburg immediately informed the regent of the family decision, at the same time suggesting that Queen Isabella should marry a Spaniard. Unluckily it was at this moment that Lord Palmerston became Minister of Foreign Affairs. The delay of the Spanish queen in choosing a husband was causing much embarrassment, both in England and in France, as it kept the delicate question open, and presented an ever-recurring cause for quarrel between the two nations. Lord Palmerston, anxious therefore to end the deadlock, wrote to the Spanish Government, and not having fully mastered the discussion, or the decision of the family conference, he urged Queen Isabella to choose with the least possible delay one of three princes for her husband; and one of these three was Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg! A copy of the dispatch was sent to the French Government, which instantly declared the specific

agreement that the prince's suit should be withdrawn had been broken. There was a bitter outburst and the French ministry and the French press attacked the Saxe-Coburg family, root and branch, declaring that it thought of nothing but its own aggrandizement; nor did they spare the queen and Prince Albert in their vituperation. In the midst of the hubbub on either side of the Channel the French ministers arranged the marriage of Queen Isabella without consulting the English Government, their choice falling upon a Spanish nobleman, the Duke of Cadiz. And they likewise decided that the marriage of the queen's sister and the Duke of Montpensier should take place on the same day, which was a deliberate breach of faith. Queen Victoria received the news in a private letter from the Queen of the French; in reply she expressed her "surprise and regret." Louis Philippe then sent a letter of apologies and explanations to his daughter, the Queen of the Belgians, by whom it was sent to the Queen of England, who answered with characteristic clearness, and with truth, that the King of the French had broken his word, which was undoubtedly the case, for on two occasions he had assured the queen that the Montpensier marriage should not take place until the Queen of Spain had borne an heir.

An ugly rumor to the effect that the choice of the French ministers had fallen on the Duke of Cadiz because they knew any marriage he might make would be childless, and that by marrying him to Queen Isabella, the throne would ultimately pass either to her sister, or her sister's heir by the Duke of Montpensier, added disgust and horror to the resentment in England. At one moment it seemed as if the two countries would go to war over the charges and countercharges of breach of faith on both sides. The English Government made a formal protest against the marriages, but they took place in October 10, 1846, amidst English execrations of the French policy. Three days later the queen wrote to King Leopold: "There is but one voice here on the subject, and I am, alas! unable to say a word of defense of one (Louis Philippe) whom I had esteemed and respected. You may imagine what the whole of this makes me suffer. You cannot represent too strongly to the king and queen (of the French) my indignation and my sorrow at what has been done."

Nevertheless two years later when Louis Philippe was a crownless fugitive it was the queen who sheltered and succored him and his family. In the year 1848 revolution ran like a flame through Europe; there were risings in

Italy; civil war in Austria; open rebellion in Prussia, and the French rose against Louis Philippe, who was obliged to flee from Paris in disguise. His sons and daughters had already preceded him to Windsor, but nothing was known of the fate of the king and queen, until under the names of "Mr. and Mrs. Smith," they reached Newhaven, when the dethroned monarch threw himself on the queen's protection. Forgetting all the trouble and double dealing of the Spanish marriages the queen responded nobly, and writing to Brussels obtained the consent of King Leopold that his father-in-law should live at Claremont, which was King Leopold's property for his lifetime. Thither Louis Philippe, the gentle Queen Amélie (who had seen her father, the King of Naples, driven from his throne), and their children went, and there they lived for the rest of their lives. "If it were not for the generosity of the Queen of England," Louis Philippe once said to a guest dining with him at Claremont, "I should not have either this house to cover my head, or the plate, or anything which is on the table." The queen's generosity, however, did not end with the exiled king, for she gave his son, the Duc de Nemours, one of the royal residences at Bushy; and he and his brothers were constant visitors at her court.

The wave of revolution reached England in this same year, and the great Chartist movement threatened to come to a serious head. Half a million people, it was announced, would meet in one of the London suburbs and would carry to the House of Parliament "in spite of the army and police," a monster petition bearing five million signatures demanding Parliament to adopt the "Charter," from which the movement took its name. Something like panic seized the ministers. Although the queen had only given birth to the Princess Louise on March 18th, early in April they advised that she should leave Windsor for Osborne. London was placed under military rule, with the Duke of Wellington in command, and every preparation made to cope with a serious riot, if not a murderous rising. But the great meeting was only poorly attended and came to nothing. The Duke of Wellington had taken such precautions that a rising would have been difficult. He had guarded the bridges over the Thames with concealed bands of soldiers, and he likewise had soldiers hidden in houses standing at the corners of streets joining the main thoroughfares of the West End of London. One of these houses was that inhabited for so long by the Baroness Burdett-Coutts at the corner of Stratton Street and Piccadilly.

Whether the ministry was deceived by the "tall talk" of the Chartists, or whether the Duke of Wellington's splendid scheme of defense became known to the agitators, is a point that will never be made clear. The most serious danger, however, was apprehended from the mob, and not without reason after the recent events in Paris, Vienna, and Berlin, but the queen, notwithstanding her physical disablement, met the situation with supreme courage. "My only thoughts and talk were politics," she wrote to King Leopold, "and I never was calmer or quieter or more earnest. Great events make me calm; it is only trifles that irritate my nerves."

CHAPTER XI

THE QUEEN'S TRIUMPH

HE summer of 1851 brought the queen a particular happiness which, from the very circumstances of her position, she could only rarely experience; she enjoyed a triumph not only in her own dominions but throughout Europe, both as a sovereign and as a wife.

Since his marriage Prince Albert had been making a careful and minute study of the conditions of British trade, manufactures, and agriculture, and he had come to the conclusion that the English had much to learn from their foreign neighbors. He had also studied the means of education, as well as the life of all classes of the people. At every step he was greatly struck by the existing national prejudice to foreign ideas of every kind, and by the insularity of thought in every rank. After the revolutions and rebellions of 1848 it seemed, in 1850, that peace had settled upon Europe, the prince

therefore brought forward a plan which he conceived would benefit the trade and manufactures of England by bringing all the products of the world under one roof; and the meeting together of the nations was to be a symbol of universal brotherhood and good will. This was the suggestion from which sprang the Great Exhibition of 1851. The queen took up the idea with enthusiasm, but because it was proposed by Prince Albert the Tories and others opposed it vehemently. Neither the queen nor the prince were of the mettle to be disheartened by mere party rancor when an object which they believed to be for the great good of the country was at stake.

The prince designed and planned, the queen encouraging him and entering into every detail. When the full scheme was published, to her Majesty's delight it received the ready support of the people; a commission was formed with the prince at its head, and work was begun. The difficulty was where to house such an exhibition of the vastness contemplated by the prince, there being no building of sufficient size in London. The Duke of Devonshire's head gardener, Joseph Paxton, came forward with the proposal for a great house of glass built after the manner of a conservatory, and the idea was instantly

adopted. Paxton originally had been a gardener's boy in the service of the Duke of Devonshire. One day he attracted the notice of his master, who was so much struck by his intelligence that he promoted him, and ultimately he became head gardener at Chatsworth. The former gardener's boy originated big conservatories in England, the famous Palm House at Chatsworth having been built by him, and it was a huge enlarged plan of this house that he proposed for the exhibition. The task of its erection in Hyde Park was given to him and he built the Crystal Palace,[1] a structure entirely of glass and iron, a thousand feet long, and seventy feet high, with a transept in the center one hundred feet in height. It was the wonder of his time, and Paxton received the honor of knighthood from the queen in reward.

But the prince had no easy task. In addition to all the arrangements for the exhibits from foreign countries and the innumerable details entailed by so vast a scheme, he was constantly harried by those opposed to it. "Just at present," he wrote during the early part of 1851,

[1] After the exhibition was over the building was taken down and reërected at Sydenham, a suburb of London, where it was called the Crystal Palace, and still serves as a place of public amusement.

"I am more dead than alive from overwork. The opponents of the exhibition work with might and main to throw all the old women into a panic and to drive myself crazy. The strangers, they give out, are certain to commence a thorough revolution here, to murder Victoria and myself, to proclaim the Red Republic in England. The plague is certain to ensue from the confluence of such vast multitudes, and to swallow up those whom the increased price of everything has not already swept away. For all this I am to be responsible, and against all this I have to make efficient provision!" It is probable that but for the queen's encouragement and enthusiasm the prince would have broken down under the strain; she supported him at every point, and took the greatest delight in driving through the Park on purpose to see the progress of the palace of glass. She wished that the sovereigns of all the civilized world, or their representatives, should be present at the opening of what a writer of the period called "this Festival of Peace," and she invited them to England as her guests. But this kindly feeling gave birth to another outcry, this time in the courts of Europe. A large number of crowned heads all gathered together, prophesied the timid, would be an irresistible temptation to the

revolutionaries and reactionaries who had been driven into exile by the events of 1848. There would be wholesale murder; and the Prussian minister went so far as to implore his master, the King of Prussia, not to allow his brother (who was his heir and afterwards the Emperor William I) to accept the queen's invitation. "A number of madmen had collected in London," he wrote, "who were bent on destroying the existing order of affairs . . . and the assassination of the Prince and his son (afterwards Crown Prince of Prussia, and Emperor Frederick) in London, which was well within the limits of possibility, would, by interrupting the succession to the Prussian throne, work the country irretrievable disaster."

The queen, secure in the allegiance and love of her people, laughed all these fears to scorn. With her own hand she wrote a prodigious number of letters to foreign sovereigns and relatives, with the result that a magnificent array of potentates and princes, including the Prince and Princess of Prussia and their son, were present at the opening ceremony, in answer to her invitation.

For weeks there was a constant stream of packing cases arriving at the huge glass building from all parts of the world; such a sight had

never been witnessed in London before. Prince Albert himself superintended every detail, and at last, late in April, was able to take the queen over the partly arranged exhibition. "We remained two hours and a half," she wrote, "and I came back quite beaten, and my head bewildered from the myriads of beautiful and wonderful things which now quite dazzle one's eyes. Such efforts have been made, and our people have shown such taste in their manufactures! All owing to this great exhibition and to Albert—all to him!

"We went up into the gallery, and the sight from there of the numerous courts full of all sorts of objects of art, manufacture, etc., was quite marvellous. The noise was overpowering, for so much was going on everywhere, and from 12,000 to 20,000 people were engaged in arranging all sorts of things. My poor Albert is terribly fagged. All day long some question or other, some little difficulty or hitch, all of which he took with the greatest quiet and good temper. Great as is his triumph, he never says a word about it, but labours to the last, feeling quietly satisfied in the country's glory, and in having gone on steadily in spite of the immense difficulties and opposition."

On the 1st of May the queen opened the great exhibition in state, amidst scenes of en-

thusiasm and loyalty unparalleled in the history of any British sovereign since the restoration of Charles II. Seven hundred thousand people, Lord Palmerston said it was nearer a million, waited for hours to greet the queen as she drove from Buckingham Palace to Hyde Park, and as patiently waited for her return. "The great event has taken place," she wrote. "A complete, a beautiful triumph and a glorious and touching sight; one which I shall ever be proud of for my beloved Albert and my country. Yes, it is a day which makes my heart swell with pride, and glory, and thankfulness. We began it with the tenderest greetings for the birthday of our little Arthur (the Duke of Connaught, born May 1, 1850). At breakfast there was nothing but congratulations. Mamma and Victor were there, and all the children and our guests. Our humble gifts of toys were added to by a beautiful little bronze replica of the Amazon statue at Berlin from the Prince of Prussia, a beautiful paper-knife from the Princess, and a nice little clock from Mamma.

"The Park presented a wonderful spectacle —crowds streaming through it, carriages and troops passing, quite like the Coronation Day. And for me the same anxiety—no, much greater anxiety, on account of my beloved Albert.

QUEEN VICTORIA AND HER SEVENTH BABY, PRINCE ARTHUR, 1850.

From the picture by Winterhalter, at Buckingham Palace.

(Reproduced from a copyrighted photograph through the courtesy of John Murray.)

"The day was bright, and all bustle and excitement. At half past eleven the whole procession in State carriages was in motion. The Green Park and Hyde Park were one densely crowded mass of human beings, in the highest good humour, and most enthusiastic. I never saw Hyde Park look as it did—people as far as the eye could reach.

"A little rain fell first as we started, but before we came near the Crystal Palace the sun shone and gleamed upon the gigantic edifice, upon which the flags of all the nations were floating. We drove up Rotten Row and got out at the entrance on that side. The glimpse of the transept through the iron gates, the waving palms, the flowers, statues, myriads of people filling the galleries and seats around, and the flourish of trumpets as we entered, gave us such a sensation which I can never forget, and I felt much moved. We went for a moment to a little side room where we left our shawls, and where we found Mamma and Mary (Princess Mary of Cambridge, afterwards Duchess of Teck), and outside which were standing the Princes.

"In a few seconds we proceeded, Albert leading me, having Vicky (the Princess Royal) at his hand, and Bertie (the Prince of Wales) holding mine. The sight as we came to the

middle, where the steps and the chair, which I did not sit on, were placed, and the beautiful crystal fountain just in front of it, was magical —so vast, so glorious, so touching. One felt, as so many did whom I have since spoken to, filled with devotion, more so than by any service I ever heard.

" The tremendous cheers, the joy expressed in every face, the immensity of the building, the mixture of palms, flowers, trees, statues, fountains; the organs, with 200 instruments and 600 voices which sounded like nothing, and my beloved husband, the author of this peace festival which united the industry of all the nations of the earth—all this was moving indeed, and it was, and is, a day to live forever. God bless my dearest Albert! God bless my dearest country, which has shown itself so great to-day! One felt so grateful to the great God, who seemed to pervade all and bless all.

" The only event it in the slightest degree reminded me of was the Coronation; but this day's festival was a thousand times superior— in fact, it was unique. The enthusiasm and the cheering, too, were much more touching, for in a church naturally all is silent.

" Albert left my side after the ' God Save the Queen ' had been sung, and at the head of the

Commissioners—a curious assemblage of political and distinguished men—read me the report, which is a long one, and to which I read a short answer, after which the Archbishop of Canterbury offered up prayer, followed by the Hallelujah Chorus, during which the Chinese Mandarin came forward and made his obeisance.

"This concluded, the procession began. It was beautifully arranged and of great length, the prescribed order being exactly adhered to. The nave was full, which had not been intended, but still there was no difficulty, and the whole walk from one end to the other was made in the midst of continued and deafening cheers, and waving of handkerchiefs. Everyone's face was bright and smiling, many with tears in their eyes. Many Frenchmen called out, '*Vive la Reine!*'

"The return was equally satisfactory; the crowd most enthusiastic, the order perfect. We reached the palace at twenty minutes past one, and went out on the balcony and were loudly cheered.

"That I felt happy and thankful, I need not say; proud of all that had passed, of my darling husband's success, and of the behaviour of my good people. I was more impressed than I could say by the scene; it was one that will never be

effaced from my memory, and never will be from that of anyone who witnessed it. Albert's name is immortalized, and wicked and absurd reports of danger of every kind which a set of people, *soi-disant* fashionables, and the most violent Protectionists, spread, are silenced."

In answer to these "wicked and absurd reports of danger of every kind" the queen had publicly shown her absolute trust in her people by having no further escort than the guard of honour which always attends a state procession. Her belief in her "good people" impressed the whole country. "Yesterday is a topic of thought and of words with everybody in London," wrote Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Minister, on the second of May. "It was indeed a glorious day for England, and the way in which the royal ceremony went off was calculated to inspire humility in the minds of the representatives of foreign governments, and to strike despair into the breasts of those, if any such there be, who may desire to excite confusion in this country.

"The Queen, her husband, and her eldest son and daughter, gave themselves in full confidence to this multitude with no other guard than one of honour, and the accustomed supply of stick-handed constables to assist the crowd in keep-

ing order among themselves. Of course there were in reserve, at proper stations, ample means of repressing any disorder if any had been attempted; but nothing was brought out and shown beyond what I have mentioned, and it was impossible for the invited guests of a lady's drawing-room to have conducted themselves with more perfect propriety than did this sea of human beings."

The queen was the happiest woman in England during that summer of 1851. So brilliant a London season had never been known, and wherever they went she and Prince Albert were received with every sign of loyalty and personal affection, but the chief cause of the queen's happiness was the public recognition on all hands of her husband's brilliant conception of the exhibition and his untiring labors in its arrangements. His contention that it would stimulate the trade of the country and improve English manufactures was speedily proved to be correct; and from that time dated the improvement of taste in matters of art. Another fancy-dress ball, this time of the Stuart period, was given by the queen at Buckingham Palace, and a month later the City of London gave a great ball at the Guildhall, to celebrate the success of the exhibition, at which the queen and Prince Albert

were present. The queen had a keen sense of humor and her gravity was sorely tried at the Guildhall. "I hear that the people were very ridiculous at the dance last night," wrote Lord Malmesbury of the civic feast. "Some ladies passed by the Queen at a run, never courtesying at all, and then returning to stare at her. Some of the gentlemen passed with their arms round the ladies' waists, others holding them by the hand and at arm's length, as if they were going to dance a minuet. One man kissed his hand to the Queen as he went by which sent her Majesty into a fit of laughter."

Thousands of people flocked to London from all parts of the country and of the world, six millions it is said being the number of visitors to the exhibition. No detail pointing to its success was too small for the queen's notice, and in her journal she notes one visitor, "a most hale old woman who had walked all the way from Cornwall, and who was near crying on my looking at her." Little wonder that after so striking and complete a triumph for her husband she regretted, on leaving London for Osborne, that "this brilliant and forever memorable season should be past." But she realized to the full the inward meaning of its success. "All this will be of a use not to be described," she

ALBERT, PRINCE CONSORT OF ENGLAND.

From a painting by Winterhalter presented to the National Portrait Gallery by Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, 1867.

wrote. "It identifies us with the people and gives them additional cause for loyalty and attachment."

The queen believed that her husband had at length gained that place in the estimation of the people which was his due, but prejudice dies hard in England, and a bitter disillusionment was in store for her, as well as a serious trial for the prince. In 1853 the Emperor Nicholas of Russia, who had expressed such devotion to the queen during his visit to England, asserted his right to protect Christians, and more especially the Christians of the Greek Church, in the Turkish dominions. The quarrel between Turkey and Russia was complicated—it had originally risen in a dispute over the holy places in Jerusalem—but the main issue was that the Turks denied the rights of protection demanded by the Emperor Nicholas, and he, on his side, determined to enforce them by the power of arms. Europe was aghast, for it saw in the occupation of the Balkan principalities (then under the rule of Turkey) by Russian soldiers, the beginning of the fulfillment of an ambition which had inspired successive occupants of the Russian throne since the days of the Empress Catherine, an ambition she had left to her race as a heritage—namely, the seizing of Constantinople. Constantinople

held by the Russians was a menace to the world, more especially to England as it would give Russia the command of the Mediterranean, and thus imperil the safety of India and the British possessions in Asia. In addition, a Russia stretching from the Mediterranean to the Arctic zone entirely upset the balance of power in Europe. The issue clearly lay with the British Government. Every effort was made to prevent war between Russia and Turkey, the queen writing personally to the Emperor Nicholas. She said that a "painful impression" had been made upon her by the occupation of the Balkan principalities by his troops, and added: "For the last four months this has caused a general commotion in Europe, which is calculated to lead to ulterior events which I should deeply deplore in common with your Majesty; but, as I know that your Majesty's intentions toward the Porte are friendly and disinterested, I have every confidence that you will find means to give expression and effect to them, so as to avoid those grave dangers which, I assure you, all my efforts will be directed to prevent. The impartial attention with which I have followed the causes which up to this time have led to the failure of all attempts at conciliation leaves me with the firm conviction that there exists no real obstacle

which cannot be removed or promptly surmounted with your Majesty's assistance."

But diplomacy proved useless, and in the summer of 1853 the Russian troops entered Turkey; the Porte had no alternative but to declare war. The Russians won a battle, and then, by a sudden attack upon Sinope in the Black Sea, destroyed the whole of the Turkish fleet, with the result that the whole of the Turkish seaboard lay at the Emperor Nicholas's mercy. Public feeling in England instantly called out for war. The integrity of Turkey was a British interest; she must be protected against the aggression of her all-devouring neighbor, who must be driven from the Black Sea. But the British Government made no sign. Lord Aberdeen was then Prime Minister, but his Cabinet was divided as to whether war should be declared upon Russia or not, and could come to no definite decision. Lord Palmerston, who was Home Secretary, shared the popular opinion and resigned office, ostensibly on a matter of domestic politics, but actually because of his views with regard to Russia. These views were well known, and in face of the widespread agitation that followed, Lord Aberdeen was compelled to recall him. Weeks and months passed, but still Lord Aberdeen made no decision; he was still hoping to avoid war; the

feeling in the country rose to fever heat. Suddenly it burst into ugly expression against Prince Albert. It was declared that he was the cause of the Government's silence and inaction, and that, inspired by his foreign relations, he was using his influence with the queen for the benefit of the Emperor Nicholas. A scapegoat had to be found for the vacillation of the Cabinet, and the people in their ignorance fell upon the prince. To such a degree did the feeling rise against him that it was solemnly stated the emperor gave the prince's relatives in Gotha and Brussels instructions which they forwarded to England, and which he used against his wife's country. "It is pretended," the prince wrote, "that I whisper in Victoria's ear, she gets round old Aberdeen, and the voice of the only *English* Minister, Palmerston, is not listened to—aye, he is always intrigued against, at the Court, and by the Court."

From the heights of happiness the queen was plunged into the deepest distress. The monstrous calumnies against her husband for a time almost obscured the grave issues which depended upon the decision of her ministers. "In attacking the Prince, who is one and the same with the Queen herself," she wrote with proud dignity and reproach, "the throne is assailed, and she

must say she little expected that any portion of her subjects would thus requite the unceasing labors of the Prince." To Baron Stockmar she wrote with passionate indignation. "That you should be absent when we are tried in the basest and most disgraceful manner, and when the Prince is being badgered for weeks by the ultras of both parties, is very unfortunate.

"The Prince treats it with contempt, but with his keen and very high feeling of honour he is wounded, hurt, and outraged at the attack on his honour, and he is looking very ill, though his spirits do not fail him. And coming as it does at a moment of such intense political anxiety, when this country is on the verge of a war, and anything but prepared for it, it is overwhelming, and depresses us sadly. Aberdeen is all kindness, and so are the other Ministers, and I am told that the reaction will be stronger than any attack could be—that the country is as loyal as ever, only a little mad. If brought forward in Parliament, they say that things could be put and explained in a manner that would elicit universal satisfaction and enthusiasm. But the uncertainty of all this is harassing."

The queen was rightly advised; a reaction did set in through the spectacle of her obvious suffering under the attacks upon her husband.

When she opened Parliament in January, 1854, the leaders of the two political parties in both the House of Lords and the House of Commons, spontaneously, and in the most emphatic manner possible, cleared the prince's character of the shameful aspersions cast upon it by "these contemptible exhibitions of malevolence and faction." To a friend who wrote expressing her delight and thankfulness at the public vindication of the prince, the queen replied:

"BUCKINGHAM PALACE, February 1, 1854.

"The Prince was very much touched by your very kind expressions, which we both value very much. I have always loved you greatly, but your admiration for, and appreciation of, my beloved husband, has naturally greatly increased this feeling. How very gratifying and satisfactory was the reference concerning this subject (the prince's vindication) in the two Houses last night!"

Toward the end of February it was found that further negotiations with Russia were useless, and her Majesty's Government had no alternative but to declare war. "Her Majesty feels called upon," ran the fateful missive that plunged England into its first and only conflict

on European soil during the queen's long reign, "by regard for an ally, the integrity and independence of whose empire have been recognized as essential to the peace of Europe, by the sympathies of her people with the right against wrong, by a desire to avert from her dominions most injurious consequences, and to save Europe from the preponderance of a power which has violated the faith of treaties and defies the opinion of the civilized world, to take up arms." The Emperor Napoleon III, who had made himself ruler of France by a *coup d'état* in 1851, allied himself with England, as also did Victor Emmanuel, King of Sardinia, and the troops of the three nations set out for the Crimea.

The queen viewed the possibility of war with horror, but when once the die was cast she was most resolute in carrying it out to a victorious conclusion. She personally wrote to ministers, to the generals commanding the army, urging them to their best efforts; she reviewed the fleets that were sent out to the Black Sea, and personally she took farewell of the various detachments of troops. A great camp had been formed at Cobham, in Surrey, from which the soldiers were drafted to the coast. "We went twice more to the camp," the queen wrote, "and had two interesting days there. It has been most success-

ful, and the troops have been particularly well all the time. When I think that this camp and our large fleet are without doubt the result of Albert's assiduous and unceasing representations to the late and the present Governments, without which I fully believe very little would have been done, one may be proud and thankful. But, as usual, he is so modest that he allows no praise. He works for the general good, and is sufficiently rewarded when he sees this carried out."

"The last battalion of the Guards and the Scottish Fusileers embarked to-day," she wrote from Buckingham Palace during the spring of 1854. "They passed through the courtyard here at seven o'clock this morning. We stood on the balcony to see them. The morning was fine, the sun was shining over the tower at Westminster Abbey, and an immense crowd collected to see the fine men, and cheered them immensely. It was with difficulty they marched along. They formed up, presented arms, and then cheered us very heartily, and went off cheering. Many sorrowing friends were there, and one saw the shaking of many a hand. My best wishes and prayers be with them all."

When war was formally declared, Lord Aberdeen suggested that a day should be appointed for public humiliation in the churches through-

out the country for the success of the British arms. But the queen, with that directness of perception and superb honesty which guided her both as a sovereign and a woman, could see no need for "humiliation" and abasement when the nation was going to war in a righteous quarrel. To her mind it savored of hypocrisy, and she did not hesitate to say so. In June we find the queen, not exactly reproving Lord Aberdeen for a protest he had made against the attacks made on Russia by the English press, but pointing out him, with the same directness, that his attitude would naturally cause the people to believe that the Government were prosecuting the war in a lukewarm spirit, and she added, that however badly the Emperor Nicholas's policy might be represented, "there is enough in that policy to make us fight with all our might against it."

Despite the brilliant victories of the allied troops, it soon became evident that the administration of the English War Office left everything to be desired. Terrible stories reached England of the sufferings of the troops through lack of proper arrangements for their housing, and of organization in sending supplies from the coast to the front. The queen was deeply distressed, and wrote to the commander in chief, Lord Raglan, saying that she had heard "that the sol-

diers' coffee was given to them green instead of roasted," and begging him to "make the camps as comfortable as circumstances can admit of." But she did not content herself with writing letters to the heads of government and the army. She herself started many of the subscriptions which were set on foot to provide the soldiers, suffering all the horrors of disease and war, with creature comforts, and with her own hands she knitted woolen mittens and comforters. She worked unceasingly by night and day upon dispatches and reports, upon the various charitable organizations, and in arrangements for the improvement of the army in the Crimea. "We are—indeed, the whole country is—entirely engrossed with one idea and one anxious thought, namely, the Crimea," she wrote to King Leopold. "We have received all the most interesting and gratifying details of the splendid and decisive victory of the Alma. My noble troops behaved with courage and determination truly admirable. The Russians expected their position would hold out three weeks. Their loss was immense.

"Since then the army has performed a wonderful march to Balaklava, and the bombardment of Sebastopol has begun. Lord Raglan's behaviour was worthy of the old Duke (the Duke

of Wellington)—such coolness in the midst of the hottest fire. I feel so proud of my troops, who, they say, bear their privations and the sad disease which still haunts them, with the greatest courage and good humour."

The anxiety the queen suffered escaped her in a letter, written a little later than the above. "Such a time of suspense," she wrote, "I never expected to see, much less to *feel*." But to the world she kept a brave front. She lost no opportunity of encouraging the brave men who were fighting for her and their country, and it was this personal interest of the queen that nerved the troops to bear their hardships and privations. Her messages were unceasing. "The Queen has received with pride and joy," she wrote to the army in the Crimea on receiving the news of the battle of Inkerman, "the telegraphic news of the glorious—but alas! bloody—victory of the 5th. Those feelings of pride and satisfaction are very painfully alloyed by the grievous news of the loss of so many generals, and in particular of Sir George Cathcart, who was so distinguished and excellent an officer."

To Lady Cathcart, Sir George's widow, the queen wrote one of those letters which showed her true womanliness, and her depths of feeling.

"I can let no one but myself express to you

my deep feeling and heartfelt sympathy on this sad occasion when you have been deprived of a beloved husband, and I and the country of a most distinguished and excellent officer.

"I can attempt to offer no consolation in your present overwhelming affliction, for none, but derived from a reliance on Him who never forsakes those who are in distress, can be of any avail. But it may be soothing to you to know how highly I valued your lamented husband, how much confidence I placed in him, and how very deeply and truly I mourn his loss.

"Sir George Cathcart died, as he lived, in the service of his sovereign and his country, an example to all who follow him."

When the queen wrote to King Leopold of the battle of Inkerman, other details had reached her which roused her bitter indignation: "Since I wrote on November 28th, we have received all the details of the bloody but glorious battle of Inkerman; 60,000 Russians defeated by 8,000 English and 6,000 French is almost a miracle. The Russians lost 15,000. They behaved with the greatest barbarity. Many of our poor officers who were slightly wounded were brutally butchered on the ground; several lived long enough to say this.

"When Sir George Cathcart fell mortally

wounded, his faithful and devoted military secretary, Colonel Charles Seymour, who had been with him at the Cape, sprang from his horse, and with one arm—he was wounded in the other—supported his dying chief, and three wretches came and bayoneted him.

"This is monstrous, and letters have been sent by the two commanders in chief to Menschikoff to remonstrate. The atrocities committed by the Russians on the wounded are too horrible to believe. General Bentinck, whom we saw on the 29th, said it was a disagreeable kind of warfare, as it was with people who behaved like savages."

Many were the letters of consolation written by the queen in those anxious days when death was taking its toll in families of all degrees throughout the country. Her devoted friend, Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland, lost a son, Lord Frederick Gower, who was in the navy, and to her the queen wrote:

"WINDSOR CASTLE, October 28, 1854.

"My thoughts are constantly with you since I heard yesterday that your worst fears about your dear boy are realized. I cannot tell you how grieved and shocked we are. Truly we both sympathize with you and the Duke and your whole family on this very sad occasion. You

well know my love and affection for you, and will therefore fully believe how my heart bleeds for you, who are so tender and devoted a mother.

"This is a terrible season of mourning and sorrow. How many mothers, wives, sisters, and children are bereaved at this moment! Alas! it is that awful accompaniment of war—disease—which is so much more to be dreaded than the fighting itself. The Prince joins with me in everything I have so inadequately expressed. You are so truly pious and good, and He who has taken your child to Himself will support and comfort you as He does all who trust in Him."

These private expressions of sympathy were naturally unknown to the public, but the queen's labors for the relief of the wounded, her messages to the troops in the Crimea, and her absorption in all the details connected with the war, speedily became known to the people, and created a profound impression. The queen had always been popular, a girl-monarch had appealed to the chivalry of the nation, but now she was a woman and proving, in every step of the great struggle, her whole-souled devotion to the welfare of her country; and it was in these anxious months of the Crimean War that the bond of

personal affection between the queen and her people first sprang into being. There is a wide difference between "popularity" and "beloved." The queen's attitude appealed direct to the heart of the nation, and the esteem her life had created changed to personal love and affection.

She visited the hospitals at Woolwich and Chatham, where the soldiers invalided from the Crimea were sent, speaking words of sympathy to the men, and inquiring into the arrangements made for their comfort. Of the visit to Chatham she wrote:

"BUCKINGHAM PALACE, March 6, 1855.

"Our visit to Chatham was of immense interest to me. Four hundred and fifty of my dear, brave, noble heroes I saw, and thank God, upon the whole all in a very satisfactory state of recovery. Such patience and resignation, courage and anxiety to return to their service! Such fine men!"

During her long reign the queen witnessed many reverses of fortune in the lives of occupants of other European thrones, but none were brought home so vividly to her personally, as when, in the height of the war she received a state visit from the Emperor Napoleon III and

the Empress Eugénie. Bound by ties of kindred and the closest friendship to King Louis Philippe and his family, the queen naturally did not seek personal acquaintance with his successor on the French throne. The new emperor in France was formally acknowledged by the queen's Government, but when the two countries became allies, and French and English soldiers were fighting side by side in the Crimea, a meeting between the two sovereigns became necessary. Napoleon III was anxious to gain military prestige to strengthen him in his occupancy of the throne of his newly founded empire; therefore, early in 1855, he announced his intention of taking personal command of the French army in the Crimea. The British Government at once foresaw a series of difficulties arising out of this proposition, since by reason of his rank the emperor would be in supreme command. These difficulties were placed before the emperor with much tact and diplomacy, and he, also with tact and diplomacy, suggested that it might be better if he discussed the question with Queen Victoria herself. Humanly speaking, it was impossible that the queen should not have a strong personal feeling against Napoleon III; his past life, the *coup d'état* by which he had gained the throne, were sufficient reasons for prejudice against

him, but it was a duty to the nation that she should make his acquaintance and show him every honor. Whatever, therefore, her private sentiments may have been at that time, they found no expression, and in reply to the emperor's suggestion the invitation to Windsor was sent. With her own hands the queen drew up and arranged the programme of festivities for the five days of the imperial visit. She also made out the list of guests to be commanded to meet them, and in the midst of all her cares and preoccupations, found time not only to think of the feelings of a friend who was in mourning, but to write this understanding and kind letter:

"WINDSOR, April 5, 1855.

"I am anxious to know what your feelings would be as to being here during the visit of the Emperor and Empress of the French, which takes place on the 16th. Tell me candidly if you still prefer delaying a little longer your return to society, and moreover if you would not rather begin upon an occasion when there are to be so many people here."

Three days before the emperor and empress landed at Dover, the widowed Queen Amélie (King Louis Philippe had died in 1850) paid the queen a visit at Windsor, "whence she drove

away unnoticed in the humblest of equipages," and only eleven years before the preparations which she saw being made to receive the sovereigns of France had been made for her and her husband. It was a sad irony of fate which deeply impressed Queen Victoria.

"News arrived that the emperor had reached London, and I hurried to be ready and went over to the other side of the castle, where we waited in one of the tapestry rooms near the guard room," the queen wrote in describing the visit. "At a quarter to seven we heard that the train had left Paddington. The expectation and agitation grew more intense. At length the crowd of anxious spectators lining the road seemed to move; then came a groom, then we heard a gun, and we moved toward the staircase. Another groom came, then we saw the advanced guard of the escort; then the cheers of the crowd burst forth. The outriders appeared, the doors opened, I stepped out, the children and Princes close behind me; the band struck up 'Partant pour la Syrie,' the trumpets sounded, and the open carriage, with the Emperor and Empress, Albert sitting opposite them, drove up and they got out.

"I cannot say what indescribable emotions filled me—how much all seemed like a wonderful

dream. These great meetings of sovereigns, surrounded by very exciting accompaniments, are always very agitating."

The rise of Napoleon III was one of the romances of the nineteenth century, and after dancing a quadrille with him at a ball given in the Waterloo Room at Windsor, the queen wrote: "How strange to think that I, the granddaughter of George III. should dance with the Emperor Napoleon, nephew of England's greatest enemy, now my nearest and most intimate ally, in the Waterloo Room, and this ally only six years ago living in this country an exile, poor and unthought of."

On the last day of the visit the imperial party were taken to see the famous Crystal Palace, then reërected at Sydenham. "Nothing could have succeeded better," wrote the queen, and then added with the implicit confidence she always placed in her people: "Still I own I felt anxious as we passed along through the multitude of people, who, after all, were very close to us. I felt, as I leaned on the Emperor's arm, that I was possibly a protection to him. All thoughts of nervousness for myself were past. I thought only of him; and so it is, Albert says, when one forgets oneself, one loses this great and foolish nervousness."

This visit to England gave the emperor more prestige in France, and throughout Europe, than any military success in the Crimea. It was the first personal acknowledgment of his equality as a sovereign by another monarch. The European governments had all officially acknowledged him as the ruler of France, but the majority of the European sovereigns had refused to regard him as anything more than a "mushroom emperor," and a "parvenu," an attitude keenly felt both by Napoleon and the French people. The brilliancy and cordiality of the queen's welcome, which culminated in her making the emperor a Knight of the Garter, the highest order in England, therefore had a particular significance for the emperor: it placed his position beyond doubt. And English ministers relied upon his gratitude for this recognition as an important factor in future questions of international politics.

The queen was favorably impressed by her visitors, especially by the beautiful Empress Eugénie, with whom in later years she formed a deep and lasting friendship. Of the emperor she wrote: "I am glad to have known this extraordinary man, whom it is certainly impossible not to like when you live with him, and even to a considerable extent to admire. I believe him to

be capable of kindness, friendship, and gratitude. I feel confidence in him as regards the future. I think he is frank, means well toward us, and, as Stockmar says, 'that we have insured his sincerity and good faith toward us for the rest of his life.' Albert felt just as I did—much pleased with everything, liking the Emperor and Empress, and being very much interested in them."

The visit was also a success for English diplomacy in another direction, for when the emperor returned to France he wrote to the queen that he had abandoned his intention of taking over the command of the French army in the Crimea.

In the following month medals were to be distributed to many of the returned soldiers from the Crimea, and the queen suggested that she should give these medals personally to the recipients. She had never done so before, the medals being given by commanding officers as representing the sovereign. But she wished to accord every possible honor to the men who had fought so bravely, and her heart dictated the honor they would prize most highly. It was the first time that such a scene had occurred in English history. "From the highest Prince of the blood to the lowest private," the queen wrote to King Leopold, "all received the same distinction for the bravest conduct in the severest ac-

tions, and the rough hands of the brave and honest soldiers came for the first time in contact with the hand of their Sovereign and Queen. Noble fellows! I own I feel as if they were my own children; my heart beats for them as for my nearest and dearest! They were so touched, so pleased—many, I hear, cried—and they won't hear of giving up their medals to have their names engraved on them, for fear they should not receive the identical ones put into their hands by me! Several came by in a sadly mutilated state. None created more interest or is more gallant than young Sir Thomas Troubridge, who had at Inkerman one leg and the foot of the other carried away by a round shot, and continued commanding his battery till the battle was over, refusing to be carried away, only desiring his shattered limbs to be raised in order to prevent too great a hemorrhage! He was dragged by in a bath chair, and when I gave him his medal I told him I should make him one of my aides-de-camp for his very gallant conduct; to which he replied, 'I am amply repaid for everything.' One must revere and love such soldiers as these!"

Lord Malmesbury tells an amusing story apropos of this presentation of medals in his "Memories." Lord Panmure, who was noted

for his heaviness of mind, was Secretary of War, and it was his duty to stand by the queen's side during the ceremony. After the queen had left, the Hon. Mrs. Norton (one of the three brilliant and beautiful Sheridan sisters) asked Lord Panmure if her Majesty was "touched." "Bless my soul, no!" was the answer. "She had a brass railing before her, and nobody could touch her." "I mean," said Mrs. Norton, "was she moved?" "Moved!" answered Lord Panmure, "she had no occasion to move."

The queen and Prince Albert returned the visit of the Emperor and Empress of the French in August, 1855, and were accorded a brilliant reception. "The enthusiasm was very great," she wrote, ". . . and the cries of Vive l'Empereur! Vive la Reine d'Angleterre! were very constant and gratifying. I was, of course, always at the Emperor's arm." In one of their drives through Paris the emperor pointed out the prison of the Conciergerie, saying to the queen, "Voilà où j'etais en prison."[1] "Strange contrast," the queen remarks in her journal, "to be driving with us as Emperor through the streets of the city in triumph."

No sooner had the Crimean War ended and

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[1] "That is where I was imprisoned."

the allies gained, by the Treaty of Paris, the points for which they had fought, than the queen was faced by all the horrors of the Indian Mutiny. The massacre of English women and children by the Sepoys and the events of that terrible time caused the queen "acute mental torture." India engrossed her thoughts, and with her clear perception she saw the danger into which the Cabinet was falling—the discussion of measures of repression in place of decision. "While we are putting off decisions," the queen wrote to Lord Palmerston, "in the vain *hope* that matters will end, and in discussing the objections to different measures, the mischief is rapidly progressing, and the time difficult to catch up again." But it was when the Mutiny was over that the queen showed her breadth of mind and her magnanimity. It was decided to abolish the old East India Company which had ruled, or misruled, India since its conquest, and to place the great peninsula directly under the government of the crown. A proclamation was therefore drawn up in order that the peoples of India might know that they had become the subjects of the queen, but she considered that the wording of the document would alienate rather than conciliate the natives. The queen had already prevented retaliatory punishment being

inflicted upon the Indians for the excesses of the Mutiny, and she now spoke her mind very plainly to the Prime Minister, Lord Derby. She told him "that it is a female sovereign who speaks to more than a hundred millions of Eastern people on assuming the direct government over them, and after a bloody civil war, giving them pledges which her future reign is to redeem, and explaining the principles of her government. Such a document should breathe feelings of generosity, benevolence, and religious tolerance, and point out the privileges which the Indians will receive in being placed on an equality with the subjects of the British crown, and the prosperity following in the train of civilization." These are noble words, breathing a noble sentiment. The question of religious tolerance was one upon which the queen felt strongly. "The deep attachment which she felt to her own religion imposed on her," she said, "the obligation of protecting all her subjects in their adherence to their own religious faith." The proclamation was rewritten, and the passages in which the queen declared religious tolerance in India stand side by side with Queen Elizabeth's famous speech at Tilbury.[1]

[1] "My loving people, we have been persuaded by some that are careful of our safety to take heed how we commit ourselves to armed

"Firmly realizing ourselves the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects, on pain of our highest displeasure."

Two hundred million human beings were added to the queen's subjects, and 800,000 square miles to the territory she governed. Her ministers apparently did not realize the responsibility involved, but the queen and Prince Albert grasped it on the instant, and it was entirely owing to the queen that a proclamation breathing peace, justice, and equality was issued,

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multitudes, for fear of treachery; but, I assure you, I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear! I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good will of my subjects. I know I have but the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart of a king, and of a King of England, too."

instead of one which asserted the rights of a conqueror over a vanquished people. Heart and brain together inspired the message of conciliation which has kept peace in India and consolidated the British rule.

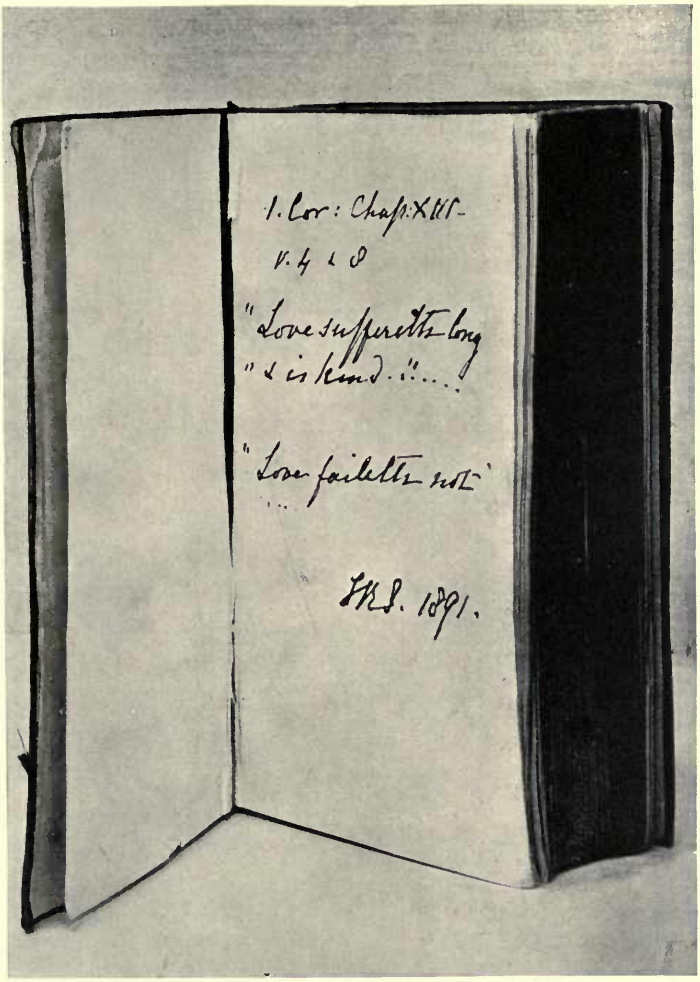
The queen's high ideal of religion may be gauged by her favorite text. Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower relates in his "Old Diaries" that in 1891, while he was abroad, he sent a little pocket Bible to the present Duke of Argyll (then Marquis of Lorne) asking him "to beg the Queen to write in it her favorite text. I knew the queen's favorite hymn was 'Lead, Kindly Light,' and was curious to know what her favorite text or chapter might be. In a short time I got the little book back with a letter from Lorne, dated Osborne, August 2d; in it he writes: 'I asked the Queen before chapel to put something in your book, and she said what she liked best was the text about "Charity" or "Love"; this was just as we were walking towards the Church. The Bishop of Ripon, Boyd Carpenter, preached, and lo! and behold! the text was exactly that of which the Queen had just spoken. The coincidence was very odd, and she was much struck by it.' So that the Queen's writing on the flyleaf of this little Bible [1] must have been written

[1] This Bible is now in the British Museum.

on the afternoon of the 2d of August, my birthday."

"Love suffereth long and is kind. Love faileth not. V. R. I., 1891." And above, these texts: 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 8. The queen's alteration of "Love" for "Charity" is a decidedly better rendering of these beautiful texts.

It was shortly before the outburst of the Indian Mutiny that the queen conferred upon her husband the title of Prince Consort, the name by which he is invariably spoken of in England. According to a letter from the queen to King Leopold, the title had already been given him by the popular voice. "You know," she wrote, "that people call Albert, Prince Consort, but it has never been given him as a title, so I intend to confer it on him by letters patent, just as I conferred the precedence on him in 1840. You remember how awkward his position was in Germany, having none but a foreign title; and besides, I think it is wrong that my husband should not have an English title. I should have preferred its being done by Act of Parliament, and so it may still be at some future period; but it was thought better upon the whole to do it now in this simple way." Prince Albert showed another side of the question when he wrote: "It was always a source of weakness to



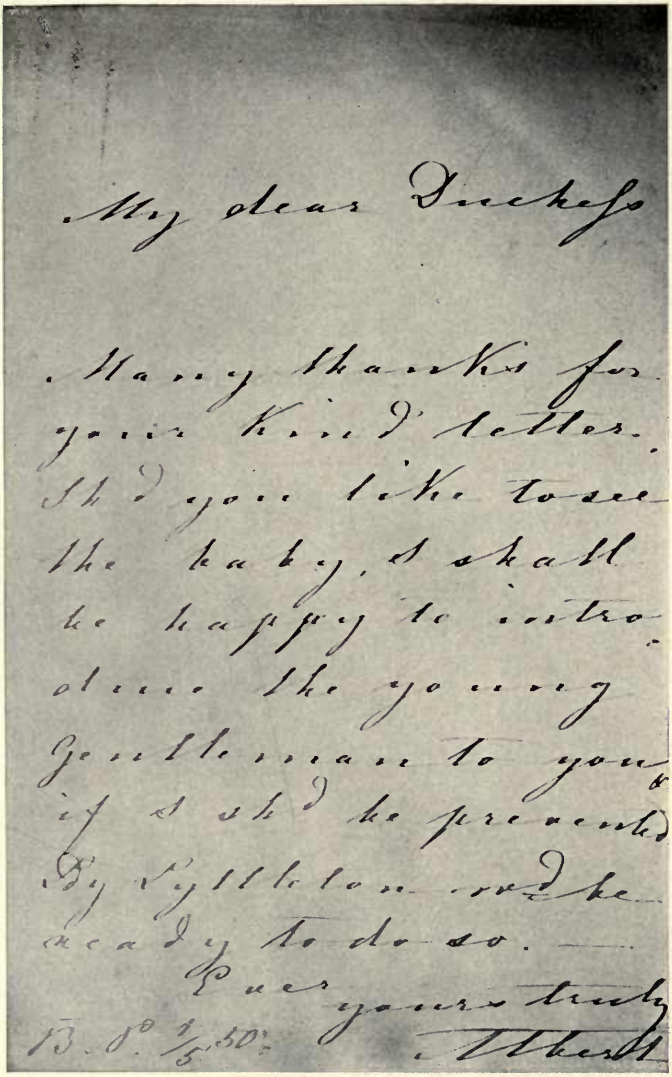
THE QUEEN'S FAVORITE TEXT WRITTEN ON THE FLY-LEAF OF A BIBLE BELONGING TO LORD RONALD SUTHERLAND-GOWER.

the Crown that the Queen always appeared before the people with her *foreign* husband." He was undoubtedly right, and the lack of appreciation of his high capabilities and life of self-sacrifice by the English people arose entirely from the fact that he was a "foreigner." The title of Prince Consort definitely fixed his position, more especially abroad, where he had only been accorded his rank as the son of a small German reigning house, a fact that had been particularly trying to the queen, and of which his detractors had not failed to make use in the English press.

CHAPTER XII

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS—THE DEATH OF THE PRINCE CONSORT

HROUGHOUT the stress and anxiety of these difficult years the queen found her greatest support in her happy domestic life. Three children were born in this decade: Prince Arthur (Duke of Connaught), a few days after whose birth Prince Albert wrote to a friend of the queen: "Many thanks for your kind letter. Should you like to see the baby, I shall be happy to introduce the young gentleman to you; if I should be prevented, Lady Lyttleton (governess to the royal children) will be happy to do so." Prince Leopold (Duke of Albany) in 1853; and Princess Beatrice (Princess Henry of Battenberg) in 1857. "She is to be called Beatrice," the queen wrote to King Leopold, "a fine old name, borne by three of the Plantagenet princesses." A year after the last child's birth, there came a break in the family circle, the Princess Royal marrying Prince Frederick William of Prussia, heir-presumptive to the Prussian



My dear Duchess

Many thanks for your kind letter. Shd you like to see the baby, I shall be happy to introduce the young Gentleman to you & if I shd be prevented by Lyttleton wd be ready to do so. —

Ever yours truly

Albert

B. P. 1/5 50.

LETTER FROM THE PRINCE CONSORT TO A FRIEND OF HIS WIFE, AFTER THE BIRTH OF THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT.

throne. The engagement took place at Balmoral in 1855, when the princess was barely sixteen; the prince was eight years older. He had fallen in love with the brilliant, charming girl on a former visit to England, and while staying at Balmoral in the September of that year had spoken of his feelings to the queen. "He had already spoken to us on the 20th of his wishes," the queen wrote, "but we were uncertain on account of her extreme youth, whether he should speak to her himself, or wait till he came back again. However, we felt it was better he should do so, and during our ride up Craig-na-Ban this afternoon he picked a piece of white heather ('the emblem of good luck') which he gave to her, and this enabled him to make an allusion to his hopes and wishes as they rode down Glen Girnock, which led to this happy conclusion."

It was a charming romance. Prince Frederick William, handsome, stalwart, sincere, and single-minded; the princess, intellectual, high-spirited, and both very much in love. But although the queen consented to the engagement, she stipulated that it must not be announced until after the princess's confirmation, a year later. The news, however, became known, and was not received favorably by statesmen and politicians in either country; the *Times*, with willful blind-

ness to the records of the house of Hohenzollern, going so far as to say that the proposed marriage was "an act of truckling to a petty German dynasty." History repeated itself. The unhappy discussions as to the queen's marriage had arisen purely from party politics; the same cause gave birth to the disapproval of her daughter's marriage. But in the many difficulties and perplexities the queen had encountered in the eighteen years of her reign, she, too, had learned that history repeated itself. Time had proved to her, over and over again, that when she continued resolutely on a course she believed to be right, the mere clamor of parties ultimately died down, and although, both as a mother and as queen she could not help being wounded by the adverse criticisms upon the engagement, she made no sign. Once again Parliament made her what amounted to a public amend. The engagement was formally announced to Parliament in May, 1857, when the queen at the same time asked the country to make some provision for the princess. It was the first time she had asked for any separate allowance for any of her children, and in view of the feeling roused by the engagement, she naturally dreaded one of those distressing discussions which had taken place in the settlement of Prince Albert's income. To her

surprise and delight, however, both parties agreed to the proposal that the princess should have a dowry of £40,000 and an annuity of £8,000, with scarcely a discussion, there being only eighteen members who voted against it.

The marriage took place in January, 1858, after a brilliant round of gayeties in the preceding summer and autumn, when the queen had entertained a succession of royal guests both in London and at Osborne. "Such a houseful," the queen wrote the day before the wedding. "After dinner a party and a very gay and pretty dance. It was very animated, all the Princes dancing. Albert did not waltz. Ernest [1] said it seemed like a dream to see Vicky [2] dance as a bride, just as I did eighteen years ago; and I still (so he said) looking very young. In 1840 poor dear Papa (the late Duke of Coburg) danced with me as Ernest danced with Vicky."

The queen's account of the ceremony is vivid with feeling.

January 25.

"The second most eventful day in my life as regards feelings. I felt as if I were being married over again myself, only much more nervous, for I had not that blessed feeling which I had

[1] Duke of Coburg. [2] Princess Royal.

then which raises and supports one, of giving myself up for life to him whom I loved and worshipped then and ever."

Before leaving Buckingham Palace for the Chapel Royal at St. James's Palace, where the wedding was to take place, the queen and the bridal couple were photographed by the then recently invented daguerreotype. "But I trembled so my likeness has come out indistinct," the queen says. "Then it came to the time to go. The sun was shining brightly. Thousands had been out since very early, shouting, bells ringing, etc. Albert and uncle (King Leopold) in field marshal's uniform with batons, and the two eldest boys [1] went first. Then the three girls [2] in pink satin trimmed with Newport lace. Alice with a wreath, and the two others with only bouquets in their hair of cornflowers and marguerites. Next the two boys [3] in Highland dress. The hall full. The flourish of trumpets and cheering of thousands made my heart sink within me. Vicky was in the carriage with me, sitting opposite. At St. James's took her into a dressing room prettily arranged, where were uncle,

[1] The Prince of Wales and Prince Alfred.
[2] Princess Alice, Princess Helena, and Princess Louise.
[3] Prince Arthur and Prince Leopold.

Albert, and the eight bridesmaids, who looked charming in white tulle with wreaths and bouquets of pink roses and white heather. Went into the gallery where Mamma (looking so handsome in violet velvet trimmed with ermine, and white silk and violet) and the Cambridges were. All the foreign princes and princesses, except uncle, the Prince of Prussia,[1] and Prince Albert of Prussia, were already in the chapel.

"Then the procession was formed, just as at my marriage, only how small the former royal family has become! Mamma last before me, then Lord Palmerston with the sword of state, then Bertie and Alfred,[2] I with the two little boys on either side, and the three girls behind. The effect was very solemn and impressive as we passed through the rooms, down the staircase, and across a covered-in court.

"The chapel, though too small, looked extremely imposing and well, full as it was of so many elegantly dressed ladies, uniforms, etc. The Archbishop at the altar, and on either side of it the royal personages. Fritz[3] looked pale and much agitated, but behaved with the great-

[1] Father of the bridegroom, afterwards King of Prussia and German Emperor.

[2] Prince of Wales and Duke of Edinburgh.

[3] Prince Frederick William.

est self-possession, bowing to us and then kneeling down in a most devotional manner.

"Then came the bride's procession, and our darling flower looked very touching and lovely, with such an innocent, confident, and serious expression, her veil hanging over her shoulders, walking between her beloved father and dearest Uncle Leopold, who had been at her christening and confirmation, and was himself the widower of the Princess Charlotte, heiress to the throne of this country—Albert's and my uncle, Mamma's brother, and one of the wisest kings in Europe!

"My last fear of being overcome vanished on seeing Vicky's quiet, calm, and composed manner. It was beautiful to see her kneeling with Fritz, their hands joined, and the train borne by eight young ladies, who looked like a cloud of maidens hovering round her, as they knelt near her. Dearest Albert took her by the hand to give her away; reminded me vividly of having in the same way proudly, tenderly, confidently, most lovingly knelt by him on this very spot, and having our hands joined there. The music was very fine, the Archbishop very nervous. Fritz spoke very plainly; Vicky, too.

"When the ceremony was over we both embraced Vicky tenderly, but she shed not one tear, and then she kissed her grandmother, and I

Fritz. She then went up to her new parents, and we crossed over to the dear Prince and Princess, who were both much moved, Albert shaking hands with them, and I kissing both and pressing their hands with a most happy feeling. My heart was so full.

"Then the bride and bridegroom left hand in hand, followed by the supporters, the 'Wedding March' by Mendelssohn being played, and we all went up to the Throne room to sign the register. The young couple first signed, then the parents of both, and all the princes and princesses present, including the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, who had come in, resplendent with pearls. I felt so moved, so overjoyed and relieved, that I could have embraced everybody."

But notwithstanding her delight in her daughter's happiness, the queen felt the separation acutely. The princess had been the constant companion of her mother and father, and was sorely missed.

"Your very kind and feeling letter touched us both much," the queen wrote to a friend on February 4th. "Tuesday (the day of the marriage) was a dreadful day, and she (the Princess Royal) also writes: 'Nobody knows how I suffered leaving you. I can survive everything since I have gone through to-day.' She says her

whole comfort is in her husband, whose kindness she cannot describe. The passage was excellent, and the delay in arriving at Antwerp was an advantage, as it gave her a day's quiet and fresh air, which always restores her.

"We have had most affectionate letters from both this morning, written on board, and have heard of their departure from Brussels, but the blank seems to me at times unbearable. I feel quite bowed down by it.

"My dearest husband, too, who loves his dear child so much, and is worshipped by her, feels it very much, but he never thinks of himself. You can so well enter into my feelings, as you have gone through the same, though you never had such a distant separation as ours."

The Princess Royal had been from her childhood a delight to her parents. When she was quite a baby a lady of the court said that the queen "has her constantly with her, and thinks incessantly about her." She inherited her father's love of art, and from the beginning showed signs of a strong will and great mental power. As a child her high spirits often led her into trouble. When she was quite a little girl the princess took great delight in the outward observances of her position—a tendency which both the queen and Prince Albert used every

endeavor to check. If she thought she was not receiving sufficient attention the little lady would resort to amusingly obvious tricks to obtain it. Once, when driving with the queen in an open carriage, she gently slipped her hand over the side and dropped her handkerchief in the road, in the hope that the carriage would be stopped and that the equerry in attendance on horseback would dismount and restore it to her. "Oh, Mamma, I have dropped my handkerchief!" she cried. "Yes, my dear," replied the queen, who had perceived the little maneuver, giving the order for the carriage to stop. "And now you will get out and pick it up," she said to the discomfited princess. There is an echo of the queen's retort to her music master when she locked the piano and said, "You see, there is no must about it," in another story, told of the Princess Royal and one of her brothers' tutors. On one occasion she addressed the tutor by his surname only. The queen, who chanced to hear her, reproved her for the rudeness, and said that if she neglected again to address the gentleman as "Mr. So-and-So," she should be sent instantly to bed. The next morning the princess met the tutor. "Good morning, ——," she said, leaving out the Mr., "and it is good night, too, because now I must go to bed."

The same spirit descended to the third generation. When the Princess Royal's little son (now the German emperor) was once on a visit with his mother to the queen, he was walking with her Majesty through some of the rooms at Windsor Castle, and in one of them they found a court official at work. The queen spoke, as she always did to those about her, with great kindness and personal interest, but the little Prince William remained silent. "Shake hands and say, 'How do you do?' to Mr. ——," the queen suggested gently. "I shall not," replied her grandson. The queen pointed out his rudeness, she used every persuasion, and finally commanded the small prince to speak to the gentleman, but he resolutely declined. "Very well," the queen said. "You and I will remain in this room till you do; and you will also apologize to Mr. —— for being so rude." The queen sat down, and taking no further notice of Prince William, talked to the official. At the end of an hour the little boy was tired, and wished to make a compromise. He would say "How do you do?" if he had not to shake hands. But he was fighting a will stronger than his own, and after another period of waiting he held out his hand, asked the question and made his apology. Then, as he was leaving the room with the queen, he

turned to the official and said, "But it is only because I'm forced to."

Princess Alice, the second daughter, took the place of the Princess Royal after the latter's marriage, as the companion of her father and mother, and to both she became especially dear and helpful. The unity of interest and sympathy which bound the queen and the Prince Consort together was reflected in the lives of their children. In all the queen's private letters, and in those of the Crown Princess of Prussia and of Princess Alice, there is one central idea, one pervading influence—the love of home and family. There is also a sincere appreciation of outside interest and affection, of which the following letter from the Princess Alice is an example. It was written shortly after the birth of the Princess Royal's son, the queen's first grandchild, the present Emperor William, in 1859.

"Mamma sends you a photograph from a drawing of our little nephew, which was done for Mamma when he was only six days old, and Vicky desired *particularly* that *you* should have a photograph of him, as she knew, dear ——, that you would value it, having always been so fond of her, and ever so kind, as indeed you are to all. Your visit to Windsor was so short I scarcely saw you at all, and I would have been

so pleased to be able to see you a little more. I am afraid it will be long before I shall have such pleasant days as when I had the pleasure of being so much with you at ——.

"Dear Vicky is very well now, and our little nephew was christened last Saturday, and has the name of Frederic William Victor Albert.

"You will be pleased to hear that both dear brothers [1] are very well and very happy, and interested in their different occupations. When we heard last from Alfred, he was at Alexandria, but is now probably at Cairo.

"I tell you all this, which I would be afraid to bore you with, did I not know the kind interest you take in us all."

A letter from the Prince Consort a few months later in the same year, shows the keen interest he and the queen still took in the affairs of King Louis Philippe's family. The prince had been making inquiries for the Duc de Nemours, one of Louis Philippe's sons, as to the education of his children. Edinburgh then enjoyed a high reputation for preparatory education, and in reply to a suggestion that the French princes should go there, the prince wrote:

"Many thanks for the transmission of Mr.

[1] The Prince of Wales who had entered the army, and the Duke of Edinburgh who had entered the navy.

Rowsell's book. I shall read his sermons, 'The English Universities' and 'The English Poor' with much interest, and am sorry to hear from you that the author should have impaired his health in the zealous discharge of his duties.

"The Duc de Nemours will go to Spain in a few days with his eldest son, the Comte d'Eu,[1] where he will enter the army, the Queen of Spain having granted the Count a commission. The second son, the Duc d'Alençon,[2] will go to Edinburgh with his two cousins, the Prince de Condé and the Duc de Penthiévre after Christmas. They are going to *enter* neither school, but are to follow some lectures of Dr. Schmitz at the High School. What has finally determined their choice is the pronunciation of Latin, which is given at the High School in the same way as on the Continent, while the English pronunciation makes of Latin a new language unintelligible abroad."

The chief event of the year 1860 was the tour of the Prince of Wales through the United States and Canada, and the engagement of Princess

[1] Afterwards married to the daughter and heiress of the Emperor of Brazil, and banished from that country at the revolution which turned the imperial form of government into a republic.

[2] Afterwards married to the sister of the Empress of Austria. The Duchesse d'Alençon was one of the victims of the fire at the Bazaar de la Charité in Paris.

Alice to Prince Louis of Hesse-Darmstadt. President Buchanan had invited the prince to pay a visit to Washington, an invitation the queen accepted on his behalf in an autograph letter, and it was on the conclusion of the tour that the queen first publicly expressed the interest she had always taken in America. The president wrote to the queen after the prince's visit, describing the warmth of his welcome and the high opinion he had created. In her reply the queen described England and the United States as "two nations of kindred origin and character," and said that she was especially desirous of maintaining the best possible relations between the two countries. Yet a year later the two people were on the verge of war, which was only averted by the influence of Prince Albert.

Unnoted by the queen, and indeed by very few, even of those in daily intercourse with the Prince Consort, his health was beginning to fail under the heavy responsibilities of his position. During a visit paid by the queen and himself to Coburg in the autumn of this year he had met with a serious carriage accident, which, although he escaped with a few bruises, threw him into a state of nervous depression. Baron Stockmar, who had retired to Coburg, was much struck by the prince's melancholy, and prophesied that "he

would fall an easy prey to illness "—a prophecy that came true. Another instance of his lowness of mind also disturbed his old friend. While the prince and his brother were walking together on the day the queen and he were leaving for England, he suddenly broke down, and unable to control his emotion said he would never see his native land again.

The depression passed, and on February 10, 1861, the queen and prince celebrated the twenty-first anniversary of their marriage. "Very few can say with me," the queen wrote to King Leopold, "that their husband at the end of twenty-one years is not only full of the friendship, kindness, and affection which a truly happy marriage brings with it, but of the same tender love, as in the very first days of our marriage."

In the following month came the first break in the queen's family circle. Her mother, the Duchess of Kent, died at Frogmore, near Windsor, after a brief but very painful illness. The duchess adored children, and used frequently to give parties for them at Frogmore. One of these took place only a few weeks before her death, many boys from the neighboring school at Eton being invited. The boys had been told, writes the Duke of Argyll, "that if they were kept by the Duchess longer than a certain hour at night, they

would be excused from morning chapel. Several of us had determined to be excused this chapel service if possible. We enjoyed ourselves much, especially a quaint dance called 'The Grandfather,' in which the Queen and Prince danced as gaily as anybody, and we all jumped over the handkerchief they and their partners held, this being one of the figures of the dance, which made each couple in turn hold a handkerchief and go down the line making others jump over it.

"But all good things come to an end. The last dance was over, the Queen and Prince drove back to the Castle, the Duchess retired, and still the appointed hour had not yet come that would excuse us from morning chapel. We were very naughty, for we stayed until lights were being turned out, when everybody had quitted the lower rooms except a few servants who were anxious we should be gone. We then made our adieus, but one of the boys incautiously let out the reason of our prolonged stay. A day or two afterwards we found, to our horror and surprise, that her Majesty had caused inquiries to be made of our masters if it was indeed true that Eton boys had overstayed their time in order to escape their duties of the following morning. Confession did not make things better."

The queen was overwhelmed by her mother's death. "On this most dreadful day of my life," she wrote to King Leopold, "does your poor broken-hearted child write one line of love and devotion. *She* is gone—that precious, dearly beloved, tender mother, whom I never parted from but for a few months—without whom I cannot imagine life—has been taken from us! It is too dreadful—but she is at peace—her fearful sufferings are at an end!"

It was at this sad time that the Princess Alice first showed those powers of comfort and consolation with which she supported the queen in the heavier loss that was to fall upon her in the same year. "Good Alice was with us all through," the queen wrote. Writing to her mother on one of the anniversaries of the duchess's death, Princess Alice said: "That was the commencement of all the grief; but with darling Papa, so full of tenderness, sympathy, and delicate feeling for you, how comparatively easy to bear, compared to all that followed." And again: "These words are for the 16th, the first hard trial of our lives where I was allowed to be with you. Do you recollect when all was over, and dear Papa led you to the sofa in the colonade, and then took me to you? I took that as a sacred request from him to love, cherish, and

comfort my darling mother to all the extent of my weak powers. Other things have taken me from being constantly with you, but nothing has lessened my intense love for you, and longing to quiet every pain which touches you, and to fulfill, even in the distance, his request."

Parliament on more than one occasion had set the seal of the country's approval of the Duchess of Kent's training of her daughter, and at the most difficult moment of her life, when the question of a possible regency for the Princess Victoria had to be considered, had given her a supreme mark of the country's confidence by appointing her regent, should the necessity arise. Many years had passed since then. The queen's life had proved the wisdom and care of her mother's training, and Mr. Disraeli, in seconding an address of condolence to the sovereign in the House of Commons, stated historical facts as well as voicing the feeling of the whole country when he said: "In the history of our reigning house none were ever placed as the widowed princess and her royal child. Never before devolved upon a delicate sex a more august or more awful responsibility. How these great duties were encountered—how fulfilled—may be read in the conscience of a loyal and grateful people. Therefore the name of the Duchess of

Kent will remain in our history from its interesting and benignant connection with an illustrious reign. For the great grief that has fallen upon the Queen there is only one source of human consolation—the recollection of unbroken devotedness to the being whom we have loved and whom we have lost. That tranquilizing and sustaining memory is the inheritance of our sovereign. She who reigns over us has elected, amidst all the splendour of empire, to establish her life on the principles of domestic love. It is this, it is the remembrance and consciousness of this, which now sincerely saddens the public spirit and permits a nation to bear its heartfelt sympathy to the foot of a bereaved throne, and to whisper solace to a royal heart."

It was after the return of the court from Balmoral to Windsor in the following autumn that the Prince Consort's health began to cause alarm. He had been suffering from rheumatism, and from depression and weakness caused by sleeplessness for some weeks, but had borne up bravely and had continued his heavy labors, which throughout the summer of this year had been much increased by the Civil War in America.

Although the British Government had declared its neutrality at the outbreak of the strug-

gle, it was public knowledge that Lord Palmerston (the Prime Minister), Mr. Gladstone (Chancellor of the Exchequer), and other members of the Cabinet were in sympathy with the South, a sympathy that was showed by the greater part of the nation, and which brought England and the North within sight of war.

In November, the South sent two envoys, Messrs. Mason and Slidell, to plead the Confederate cause at the courts of Queen Victoria and the French emperor. The envoys succeeded in running the Federal blockade, and reaching Havana, took passage in an English steamer, the *Trent*, bound for Southampton. When the vessel was a day out at sea she was fired upon by a Federal man-of-war, the *San Jacinto*, whose commander, Captain Wilkes, boarded her and carried off the Confederate envoys and their secretaries as his prisoners. The *Trent* pursued her voyage, reaching England on November 27th, and when the news she brought became known there was one universal cry throughout the country. War, and only war, could answer this violation of the British flag. The Cabinet was of the same mind as the people. Lord Palmerston sent to the queen, for her approval, a draft of a message to be delivered at Washington demanding "immediate reparation for a

wanton breach of international law." The prince consort immediately realized that the language of the dispatch, and its tone of harsh and uncompromising command admitted of no parleying on the part of the North. The idea of a war between England and America filled the prince with horror, and although England's position in the matter was unassailable, and had the support of France, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, the prince suggested that the dispatch should be altered, and that the North should be given every opportunity " for receding from the position in which they had been placed by the overzealous action of their agent."

His fatal illness was already upon him, and he was so weak that he could scarcely hold his pen, but he wrote to Lord Palmerston on the queen's behalf, making his conciliatory suggestions on the margin of the Prime Minister's peremptory dispatch. These suggestions were carried out, the perilous situation was avoided, the envoys being released in January, 1862. But the prince did not live to see the result of his timely intervention, which not only prevented a fratricidal struggle between England and America, but which aided the reuniting of the North and South. Many of the Federal leaders afterwards declared that if war had broken out between

England and the North at that particular juncture, the European powers would have formally recognized the Confederation of the South, with calamitous results to the whole of America.

"Lord Palmerston cannot but look on this peaceful issue of the American quarrel," the queen wrote when the news of the liberation of the Southern envoys reached her, "as greatly owing to her beloved Prince, who wrote the observations on the draft to Lord Lyons, in which Lord Palmerston so entirely concurred. It was the last thing he ever wrote." To say that a war in 1861 between England and the North would have prevented the reformation of the Republic of the United States would be to prophesy idly, but it is certain that the amalgamation of North and South would have been retarded, perhaps for many years, and that further fratricidal warfare must have ensued. It was therefore a curious anomaly that Prince Albert, the son of a reigning prince, the descendant of an ancient royal house, the husband of a queen, and himself imbued by strong monarchical instincts, should have indirectly aided in the reëstablishment of a republic. The "last thing he ever wrote" influenced the lives of millions, and helped to bring into being a great and powerful nation.

The prince's illness began on December 1st.

He walked with the queen in the garden at Windsor, and afterwards went to service in the chapel, but he looked, the queen wrote, "very wretched and ill, but insisted on going through all the kneeling." The next day he could eat nothing. "He did not dress, lay upon the sofa, and I read to him," the queen says. "He said that if his own illness was fever it would be fatal to him. Next day," she continued, "he would take nothing hardly, no rusk or bread—nothing. My anxiety is great and I feel utterly lost when he, to whom I confide all, is in such a listless state, and hardly smiles. Sir James Clark arrived and was grieved to see no more improvement, but was not discouraged. Albert rested in the bedroom, and liked being read to, but no books suited him, neither 'Silas Marner' nor 'The Warden.' Lever's 'Dodd Family' I subsequently tried, but he disliked it, so we decided to have one of Sir Walter Scott's to-morrow." The queen was "dreadfully overcome and alarmed." She noted the progress of his illness, the nature of which the doctors were unable to determine, hour by hour. On the 4th: "Alice was reading to him; he was very restless, haggard, and suffering, though at times he seemed better. I was sadly nervous with ups and downs of hope and fear, while Alice was reading

'The Talisman' in the bedroom, where he was lying on the bed. . . . Alice continued to read to him. In the evening he seemed more himself, most dear and affectionate when I went in with little Beatrice, whom he kissed. He quite laughed at some of her new French verses which I made her repeat. Then he held her little hand in his for some time, and she stood looking at him. He then dozed off, when I left not to disturb him." On the 6th: "By eight he was up, and I found him seated in his sitting room looking weak and exhausted, and complaining of there being no improvement, and he did not know what his illness could come from. I told him it was overwork and worry. He said, 'It is too much; you must speak to the Ministers.'"

On the following day the doctors were able to say that the prince was suffering from typhoid fever. "The doctors now said that they had all along been watching the patient's state, suspecting fever, but unable to judge what it might be and how to treat him until that morning; and that the fever must have its course—namely, a month dating from the beginning, which they considered to have been the day Albert went to Sandhurst. (The prince had gone to Sandhurst on November 22d, to inspect the new Staff College and the Royal Military Academy, in the es-

tablishing of which he had taken the keenest interest.) They were not alarmed—saw no bad symptoms. Albert himself was not to know it, as he unfortunately had a horror of fever.

"What an awful trial this is, to be deprived for so long of my guide, my support, my all! My heart is ready to burst, but I cheered up, remembering how many people had fever. Good Alice was very courageous and tried to comfort me. I seem to live in a dreadful dream.

"Late in the day my angel lay in bed and I sat by him watching. The tears fell fast as I thought of the days of anxiety, even if not of alarm, which were in store for us; the utter shipwreck of our plans, and the dreadful loss this long illness would be publicly as well as privately.

"And then when I saw Sir James Clark and Dr. Jenner, I talked over what could have caused this illness. Great worry and far too hard work for long—that must be stopped. Dr. Jenner is going to sit up with him, as well as the valet. My poor darling, I kissed his hand and his forehead. It is a terrible trial to be thus separated from him, and see him in the hands of others, careful and devoted though they are."

"When I returned from breakfast," the queen wrote on the 8th, "I found him lying on the bed in the Blue Room. The sun was shining

brightly; the room large and cheerful. He said, 'It is so fine.' For the first time since his illness he asked for some music, and said, 'I should like to hear a fine chorale played at a distance.' We had a piano brought into the next room, and Alice played 'Ein Feste Burg ist Unser Gott,' and another, and he listened, looking upward with such a sweet expression and with tears in his eyes. He then said in German, 'That is enough.' It was Sunday, and Kingsley preached, but I heard nothing."

The queen was constantly at the bedside. "When I went to see him after dinner, he was so pleased to see me, stroked my face and smiled, and called me 'dear little wife.' His tenderness this evening, when he held my hand and stroked my face, touched me so much, and made me so grateful. . . . He was so kind and liked me to hold his dear hand. Oh, it is an anxious time!"

A day or two later there was a distinct improvement. "Dear Albert was very confused, but everything else very satisfactory on the 11th. Another good night for which I thanked and blessed God. I went over at eight and found Albert sitting up to take his beef tea, over which he always laments most bitterly. I supported him, and he laid his dear head—his beautiful

face, more beautiful than ever, has grown so thin—on my shoulder, and remained a little while there, saying, ' It is very comfortable, dear child,' which made me so happy."

On the 12th the lungs became affected, and the prince was in great distress, his breathing becoming more and more difficult, but despite his malady he still thought of matters of state. " You have not forgotten," he said to the queen when she came to his bedside in the evening, " the important communication to Nemours? " The queen asked what it was, and he said, " The one Lord Palmerston told you to make to him about his nephews "—this was that the Comte de Paris and the Duc de Chartres, grandsons of Louis Philippe, who had taken service in the American army, should leave that service if war were declared between England and the North. After the queen's unceasing kindness to their family, it would have been a serious matter if the young French princes had taken up arms against England, which they would have been compelled to do if they remained in the American service after a declaration of war.

The prince rallied on the morning of the 14th. " I went over at seven," the queen wrote, " as I usually did. It was a bright morning, the sun just rising and shining brightly. The room had

a sad look of night-watching—the candles burned down to their sockets, the doctors looking anxious. I went in. Never shall I forget how beautiful my darling looked lying there with his face lit up by the rising sun—his eyes unusually bright, gazing, as it were, on unseen objects, but not taking any notice of me."

Throughout the whole of her life the queen had never witnessed a serious illness, and like all strong and healthy people she could not realize that there was any danger. But her friends were filled with alarm, and one of them who had been a close and intimate witness of her married happiness, wrote: "Alas! we think alike on the heavy cloud that hangs over us. It is a sort of terror that never came near us before. I can't *think* of the Queen! After the first shock (if it be dispensed indeed) where is she to turn? What friend, what stay on earth left?

"The Queen in her really wonderful kindness sent me an account on the 10th (unasked for; I then believed the newspapers, before the bulletins began, that it was a cold) through Lady Augusta Bruce, knowing, as she said, that I should be anxious, to tell me it had been a feverish attack, but that all was going on favourably. So like the very best part of her character to be

thinking of others and feeling for all even when most preoccupied herself. Alas, poor thing! More in constant want, in constant habit of consulting and leaning upon her prop, than almost even any wife I ever knew. 'A widow indeed and desolate,' she will be. Oh! I will try to hope."

On the previous afternoon there had been an alarming failure of strength, and the Prince of Wales had been telegraphed for, the queen finding him by his father's bedside when she paid a second visit to the sick room. It was then that the doctors were obliged to warn her. "I asked if I might go out for a breath of fresh air," she wrote. She was stunned by the news, and even then could not realize the danger. "The doctors answered, 'Yes, just close by for a quarter of an hour.' At about twelve I went on the terrace with Alice. The military band was playing at a distance, and I burst into tears, and came home again. I hurried over at once. Dr. Watson was in the room. I asked him whether Albert was not better, as he seemed stronger, though he took very little notice. He answered: 'We are very much frightened, but don't, and won't give up hope.' They would not let Albert sit up to take his nourishment, as he wasted his strength by doing so. 'The pulse keeps up,' they

said, 'it is not worse.' Every hour, every minute was a gain, and Sir James Clark was very hopeful. He had seen much worse cases, but the breathing was the alarming thing; it was so rapid. There was what they call a dusky hue about his face and hands which I knew was not good. I made some observation about it to Dr. Jenner, and was alarmed by seeing that he seemed to notice it.

"Albert folded his arms, and began arranging his hair just as he used to do when well and dressing. These are said to be bad signs. Strange! as though he were preparing for another and greater journey."

The day passed in alternating hope and fear, the doctors doing their utmost to cheer the queen. "About half past five," the queen writes, "I went in and sat beside his bed, which had been wheeled toward the middle of the room. 'Good little wife,' he said and kissed me, and then gave a sort of piteous moan, or rather sigh, not of pain, but as if he felt he was leaving me, and laid his head upon my shoulder, and I put my arm under his. But the feeling passed away again, and he seemed to wander and to doze, and yet to know all. Sometimes I could not catch what he said. Occasionally he spoke in French.

THE QUEEN'S BEDROOM, OSBORNE.

After his death, the photograph of the Prince Consort always remained over his pillow.

"Alice came in and kissed him, and he took her hand. Bertie, Helena, Louise, and Arthur came in one after the other, and took his hand, and Arthur kissed it, but he was dozing and did not perceive them. Then he opened his dear eyes, and asked for Sir Charles Phipps, who came in and kissed his hand. General Grey and Sir Thomas Biddulph each came in and kissed his hand, and were dreadfully overcome.

"It was a terrible moment, but thank God I was able to command myself, and to be perfectly calm and remained sitting by his side. So things went on, not really worse and not better."

As the evening passed the prince's breathing grew more and more difficult; he was dozing but conscious, for when the queen whispered, "It is your own little wife," he kissed her. Gradually the breathing grew fainter and fainter, and at a quarter past ten, the prince died, the queen kneeling by the bedside holding his hand.

Her self-command under this blow that shattered the happiness of twenty years was amazing, but her grief was so intense that in the first few days there were fears that her reason would give way under the strain. The Princess Alice never left her, and her two most intimate friends, Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland, and Lady Au-

gusta Stanley[1] were constantly beside her. Four days after the death of the prince the queen drove to Frogmore and chose the site for a mausoleum in which she and her husband might be buried, and the day after, at the urgent bidding of King Leopold, she left Windsor for Osborne, her uncle rightly thinking that the anguish of the funeral would be more than she could bear.

"The queen is beautifully *calm*," wrote a lady who was deeply attached to her, "with unceasing tears—and simple and childlike as she always is, in her real and deep grief. She says to anything proposed to her to do now 'I will do it. I will do everything.' The theatrical description of her calling her children together and preaching to them about public duty directly, was quite false. She saw them all as soon as she could—went upstairs to kiss the little one[2] in her bed, and took her to her own. . . . Oh, such love, such a tie, a oneness, and all shattered, and broke off forever on earth! She has *no* friend to turn to. . . . The worst, far the worst, is yet to come—the numberless incessant wishes to 'ask the Prince,' 'to send for the Prince,' the never-failing joy, fresh every time when he an-

[1] *Née* Lady Augusta Bruce, and married to Dean Stanley.

[2] Princess Beatrice.

swered her call. The greater her distress or doubt or anxiety the fuller seemed her comfort in him—and so wise, so instantly ready and sagacious in advising and cheering her. Her greatest delight was in obeying him.

"The Queen's grief is perfectly natural, womanly, and gentle; *so* deep. It has been a heart wound. Never was there more tender love; nor so incessant a performance of every conjugal duty."

The only thorn in the queen's married life had been the lack of appreciation of her husband by the people, and although the public outburst of grief at his death soothed and comforted her, she was not unconscious that it was in some measure caused by the spectacle of her own tragedy, and sorrow for her personal loss. Her strongest wish was that her husband's unceasing labors for the country should be recognized by her subjects themselves, and with both despair and entreaty in her voice she turned to the Duchess of Sutherland, as she looked for the last time on her dead husband's face, and cried, "Will they do him justice now?"

She looked feverishly for every word of praise, for every sign of public recognition, and when Tennyson published his "Idylls of the King," shortly after the prince's death, she said

the dedication [1] to the prince was "the manner of salve that best soothed her aching, bleeding heart."

Prince Albert's death made public many details of which the great mass of the people had been in ignorance, and it was generally realized that the queen had not only lost an adored husband, but a wise and practiced counselor, and that the country had lost one of its strongest supports. Dean Stanley gave the general impression among the thinking classes of the nation when he said: "How great the calamity is may be measured by thinking that it transcends even anything which the passionate burst of public grief has ventured to express, or even knows or thinks of. No public death could have affected me so much. I do not suppose I should

[1] "We know him now: all narrow jealousies
Are silent; and we see him as he moved,
How modest, kindly, all accomplished, wise,
With what sublime repression of himself,
And in what limits, and how tenderly;
Not making his high place the lawless perch
Of wing'd ambitions nor a vantage ground
For pleasure; but thro' all this tract of years
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
In that fierce light which beats upon a throne
And blackens every blot: for where is he
Who dares foreshadow for an only son
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd than his?"

ever have known more of him, but so long as he lived I felt sure that there was a steady support to all that was most excellent in the English Church. That barrier is now thrown down, and God protect us from the spirits that will rush in through the chasm."

Ministers, too, were afraid that, deprived of the unceasing help and counsel of the prince, the queen might be unable to meet the constantly recurring difficulties of politics and matters of state; it was as if a reign had ended, and a new one about to begin, full of pitfalls and dangers, which a heartbroken widow was to face alone. For the first month succeeding the prince's death, the queen never saw her ministers, messages and documents requiring her signature being carried backward and forward by Princess Alice and Sir Charles Phipps, the Keeper of the Privy Purse; her grief was so absolute and dominating that it left her no thought or interest. As the weeks passed and the queen showed no signs of renewing her personal interviews with her ministers it was pointed out to her, as gently and as kindly as possible, that the communications through a third person could not possibly continue, that they were unconstitutional. The message had all the bracing effect upon the queen of a reproof, and she saw that

by thus indulging her unhappiness she ran the risk of failing in her duty to her people. She had lost half her existence she said, and nothing hereafter could be to her what it had once been; no child could fill the place that was vacant. But she would not seek to ease herself of her burden, and would steel herself to bear it alone. Hitherto the prince had thought for her, now she would think for herself, and his example should be her guide. She would bestow on affairs of state the same minute care that she and the prince had bestowed upon them, and her decisions would be those which she believed he would have taken; and she would seek every advantage that she could derive from his memory.

The prince's memory was never absent from the queen's mind. She believed that his spirit was near her. His rooms were left exactly as when he died, scarcely a paper being touched, and she wore mourning for him to the end of her life. She relied upon his memory as in his lifetime she had rested upon his judgment, and in seeking to do all that she knew he would have done, continued the wise policy in which for twenty years he had unceasingly instructed her. No husband was ever more sincerely mourned than Prince Albert, and no wife was ever more deeply bereaved than the queen; the one had

been the complement to the other; the queen used no exaggeration when she said she had lost half her existence. It needed high courage to set out on a task of governing millions of people, alone and unaided at a moment of supreme desolation, and when the joys and delights of twenty years of absolute domestic happiness had been suddenly swept away. At no moment in her life did the queen rise so superbly to the demands of her position as when she resumed her duties after the first black month of her widowhood.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FIRST YEARS OF WIDOWHOOD

HE new era of the queen's reign began in profound gloom and seclusion. For the first three years there were no court functions, and six years passed before she again opened Parliament in person. Her life was one of unceasing mourning and her duties to the state. When the Prince of Wales was married to Princess Alexandra of Denmark in 1863, it was hoped by the people that the queen would take this moment of national rejoicing to resume her place in public. But she had no intention of breaking her seclusion; she had neither the strength nor the power to undertake, alone, the representative part of her position which had always been shared by her husband. Contrary to all expectation she took no official part in the wedding ceremony at St. George's Chapel, but looked on, dressed in her widow's garb, from a gallery above the choir, so sad, so desolate, that

even Lord Palmerston, whose bitterest enemy could not have accused him of sentimentality, was moved to tears when he saw her.

Immediately the Prince and Princess of Wales returned from their honeymoon the queen delegated to them the position of host and hostess in her behalf at court functions; and court balls, concerts, drawing-rooms, and levées were resumed, but many years passed before the queen attended one of them herself. One of her first appearances in public was at the unveiling of a statue to the Prince Consort at Aberdeen, when she said to the provost of the city: "I could not reconcile it to myself to remain at Balmoral while such a tribute was being paid to his memory, without making an exertion to show you personally the deep and heartfelt sense I entertain of your kindness and affection, and at the same time to proclaim, in public, the unbounded reverence and admiration, the devoted love which fills my heart, for him whose loss must throw a lasting gloom over my future life."

The queen devoted herself entirely to the public business, spending the greater portion of the year either at Osborne or Balmoral; the recollection of her happy married life and its tragical close at Windsor filled the old castle with such sad memories that she was always glad to leave

it. Another reason for her distaste for Windsor was that in the summer time she liked to do her work out of doors, and at the castle it was difficult to reach the private gardens unobserved. When she was there she used to drive to Frogmore and write under two great ilex trees close to the mausoleums she had built for her husband and her mother, or in a cottage Queen Adelaide had built in the kitchen garden; at Osborne and Balmoral a large tent was placed within easy reach of the house. Wherever she might be the queen's routine for the day was the same. Immediately after breakfast, which, as in her childhood's days at Kensington, was taken out of doors, she began to read the papers and dispatches sent her by her ministers, writing her opinion or decision upon each one. This continued without cessation until twelve o'clock, when she went for a walk or drive until one o'clock, working again at her table until luncheon at two. A long drive was the only break in the afternoon to the endless correspondence. After tea one of her ladies played or read to her while she rested, and the stress of work was sometimes so heavy that the writing had to be continued long after midnight. The queen said that the only means by which she maintained her health was by spending as many hours as

possible each day in the open air; she had no fear of the weather and to the end of her life always drove in an open carriage, even in the chilly autumn afternoons at Balmoral. Ministers, messengers, and officials were constantly coming and going; no detail of the public service was allowed to escape her attention. The physical labor alone was prodigious, thousands of dispatches, either requiring her signature or her decision, passing through her hands in the year, yet she found time to maintain a voluminous correspondence with her family, and to interest herself not only in minute details of her children's lives, but in the happiness and cares of her friends. Half of her existence, as she herself said, had gone, but to the life that remained to her she devoted all the energies of her character. The Duchess of Kent had laid a sure and strong foundation upon which Prince Albert had built a beautiful edifice. His twenty-one years of example now bore their fruit, and during the long years that remained to her, the influence of that example never left the queen; her wifely devotion affected the destiny of her people.

But it seemed as if some malign fate had stepped between the English nation and the Prince Consort. Alive, they had ever been ready to misinterpret his actions and misjudge him;

dead, they had recognized his merit and his labors, but as the years passed and the queen still mourned him in seclusion they began to murmur. They did not know that the queen's life was spent in performing the work formerly done by her husband and herself, but imagined her wholly given up to an unavailing sorrow. In 1864 the murmurs burst into expression. The queen was neglecting her duties, her attitude "was contrary to the nation's interests," and the Radicals openly declared that the cost of the crown to the country was "out of all proportion to its practical uses." Then the press took up the question, declaring "her attitude to the public to be a breach of public duty." The queen was bitterly distressed by these outbursts of public opinion, but she was not of the temperament to be affected by adverse judgment when she knew she was fulfilling her duty to the best of her powers. With characteristic frankness she spoke directly to the people. She was determined there should be no doubt as to her intention, and although there is the same spirit in her message that dictated the imperious, "I will show them that I am Queen of England" in the famous Ladies of the Bedchamber discussion, that spirit had grown wise and understanding, and her letter is rather that of a mother explain-

ing her position to ignorant children in whose affection she has every confidence, children who have rebelled against a parental attitude they do not understand, and the reasons for which they cannot grasp.

"An erroneous impression seems generally to prevail, and has lately found frequent expression in the newspapers, that the Queen is about to resume the place in society which she occupied before her great affliction; that is, that she is about to hold levées and drawing-rooms in person, and to appear as before at Court balls, concerts, etc. The idea cannot be too explicitly contradicted.

"The Queen appreciates the desire of her subjects to see her, and whatever she can do to gratify them in this loyal and affectionate wish she will do. Whenever any real object is to be obtained by her appearing on public occasions, any national interest to be promoted, or anything to be encouraged which is for the good of the people, her Majesty will not shrink, as she has not shrunk, from any personal sacrifice or exertion, however painful.

"But there are other and higher duties than those of mere representation which are now thrown upon the Queen, alone and unassisted—duties which she cannot neglect without injury

to the public service—which weigh increasingly upon her, overwhelming her with work and anxiety. The Queen has laboured conscientiously to discharge these duties till her health and strength, already shaken by the bitter and abiding desolation which has taken the place of her former happiness, have been impaired.

"To call upon her to undergo, in addition, the fatigue of these mere State ceremonies which can be equally well performed by other members of her family, is to ask her to run the risk of entirely disabling herself for the discharge of those other duties, which cannot be neglected without serious injury to the public interests. The Queen will, however, do what she can—in the manner least trying to her health, strength, and spirits—to meet the loyal wishes of her subjects; to afford that support and countenance to society, and to give that encouragement to trade, which is desired of her. More the Queen cannot do; and more the kindness and good feeling of her people will surely not exact of her."

Her message to the people did not, however, silence the call for her return to public life, and on the third anniversary of the Prince Consort's death, the *Times*, which in the April of the same year had said that the queen could not exert "an abiding influence on public affairs without ap-

pearing as a factor in them," spoke more explicitly. "The living," it said, "have their claims as well as the dead; and what claims can be more imperative than those of a great nation, and the society of one of the first European capitals? It is impossible for a recluse to occupy the British throne without a gradual weakening of that authority which the sovereign has been accustomed to exert. For the sake of the Crown as well as of the public we would, therefore, beseech her Majesty to return to the personal exercise of her exalted functions. It may be that in time London may accustom itself to do without the Palace, but it is not desirable that we should attain that point of republican simplicity. For every reason we trust that now that three years have elapsed, and every honour that affection and gratitude could pay to the memory of the Prince Consort has been offered, her Majesty will think of her subjects' claims and duties of her high station, and not postpone them longer to the indulgence of an unavailing grief."

But as invariably happened when public feeling rose against the queen, there was a reaction in her favor; however much they misunderstood her at times, the people's love never wavered, and she now had a champion in no less a person than the Radical, John Bright. At a great Lib-

eral meeting held in London, a member of Parliament called Ayrton publicly denounced the queen's "neglect of public duty," and John Bright springing to his feet said, "I am not accustomed to stand up in defense of those who are possessors of crowns. But I think there has been, by many persons, a great injustice done to the Queen in reference to her widowed and desolate position; and I venture to say this, that a woman, be she the Queen of a great realm, or be she the wife of one of your laboring men, who can keep alive in her heart a great sorrow for the lost object of her life and affection, is not at all likely to be wanting in a great and generous sympathy with you." It was purely a question of her appearance at public ceremonies and the absence of all court gayety that troubled the people, and to satisfy them the queen was persuaded to open Parliament in person once more in 1866. The ordeal was painful, and Princess Alice wrote from Darmstadt, "I am happy to think you are quiet at Osborne after all you had to go through. The emotion, and other things recalled by such an event, must have been very powerful and have tried you much. It was noble of you, darling Mamma, and the great effort will bring consolation. Think of the pride and pleasure it would have given darling Papa—the brave

example to others not to shrink from their duty; and it has shown that you felt the intense sympathy which the English people evinced, and still evince in your great misfortune."

The popular feeling against the queen's seclusion never wholly died away, despite her appearances on all occasions when her presence helped philanthropical or national objects, until the nation realized that, although she no longer was seen in public in her state coach with her crown upon her head in all the blazonry and pomp of royalty, she was working night and day for the good of the country. The public discussion and disapproval of her attitude added to the queen's griefs and burdens. "Much, too much, rests upon me, poor woman," she wrote, "standing alone as I do, with so many children, and every day, every hour, I feel more and more the horrible void that is ever growing greater and more fearful." She described herself as "a cruelly misunderstood woman, whom the Press attacked in a cruel, heartless way." She had explained to her people that it was the ceaseless work entailed by her position that necessitated the husbanding of her strength, but they had not realized the magnitude of her task, and she besought her friends to aid in protecting her against the newspaper attacks.

"It is her overwhelming *work*," she wrote to a friend, "and her health (which is greatly shaken by her sorrow), and the totally overwhelming amount of work and responsibility—work which she feels really wears her out.

"From the hour she gets out of bed till she gets into it again there is work, work, work—letter boxes, questions, etc., which are dreadfully exhausting—and if she had not comparative rest and quiet in the evening, she would most likely *not be alive*. Her brain is constantly overtaxed. Could this truth not be openly put before people? So much has been told them they should know this very important fact, for *some* day she may *quite* break down."

Her uncle, King Leopold, died on December 10, 1865, and almost his last words were "Pauvre Victoire, ne la tourmentez." [1] His loss removed an adviser upon whose judgment she had relied ever since her childhood; and there was now no one left to whom she could turn for guidance. "Alas! alas!" wrote Princess Alice, from Darmstadt, "beloved Uncle Leopold is no more! How much for you, for us, for all, goes with him to the grave! One tie more of those dear old times is rent!

"I do feel for you so much, for dear Uncle was

[1] "Poor Victoria, do not torment her."

indeed a father to you. Now you are head of the family—it seems incredible, and that dear Papa should not be by your side.

"The regret for Uncle Leopold is universal—he stood so high in the eyes of all parties; his life was a history in itself—and now that book is closed. I am almost glad this sorrow has fallen into these days already so hallowed by melancholy and precious recollections. How I recollect every hour, every minute of those days. In thinking of them one feels over again the hope, the anxiety, and lastly the despair and grief of that irretrievable loss (of Prince Albert). The Almighty stood by you and us, and enabled us to bear it, for I always wonder that we lived through that awful time.

"The future world seems so like a real home for there are so many dear ones to meet. There is something particularly sad in the death of the last one of a large family—to feel that none is left to tell of each other, and of their earlier life, which the younger ones could only know through their lips."

But crushed as she was by this fresh sorrow and this breaking of a lifelong tie, the queen's spirit rose to her task. Already in 1864 she had, by her diplomacy and personal intervention with her ministers, prevented England being involved

in the war between Prussia, allied with Austria, upon Denmark roused by the question of the Schleswig-Holstein duchies. These duchies had been made over to Denmark by Duke Christian of Schleswig-Holstein in 1852, at a conference held in London, but his son, Duke Frederick, declined to be bound by his father's pact, and in 1863 asserted his hereditary rights. He was supported in his claim by several of the German states, but the King of Prussia swept them on one side and persuaded the Emperor of Austria to join forces with him to drive all Danes from the duchies, on the understanding that this being accomplished Prussia and Austria should hold them jointly until some arrangement had been arrived at for their future governance. The designs of Prussia, whose fortunes were then being led by Bismarck, were unmistakable. The queen was in a difficult position, since her sympathies lay with Prussia by reason of her daughter the Crown Princess, with the King of Denmark because of her daughter-in-law, the Princess of Wales, and with Duke Frederick because of his misfortunes. The King of Denmark and Duke Frederick both appealed to her for help, as did her German relatives who were supporting the duke against what they considered the aggression of Prussia. But her course was

clear to her. "You seem quite to overlook the fact that England is bound by the treaty of 1852," she wrote to her brother-in-law the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, "and greatly as I deplore the manner in which the treaty was concluded, the Government here has *no other choice* but to adhere to it. Our beloved Albert *could not* have acted otherwise."

The nation would have been quite prepared for war if the Government had decided to support Denmark, and at one moment it seemed as if her ministers were about to espouse openly that country's cause, but the queen's influence prevailed, and in the short struggle in which Denmark was utterly worsted, England maintained a strict neutrality and was spared all the horrors of a continental war.

The dual occupation of the Schleswig-Holstein duchies by Prussia and Austria, who were rivals for the leadership of the many independent states of which Germany was then composed, only lasted two years. There were incessant disputes as to the final settlement of the government of the duchies, disputes which finally culminated in the struggle known as the "Seven Weeks' War." It was a moment of anguish for the queen. Her brother-in-law the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, her cousin the blind King of

Hanover (son of the Duke of Cumberland), and her son-in-law, Prince Louis of Hesse, were ranged upon the side of Austria, while her other son-in-law, the Crown Prince of Prussia, was with his father.

"We are living in such a state of anxiety and alarm," wrote Princess Alice to the queen. "War would be too fearful a thing to contemplate—brother against brother, friend against friend, as it will be in this case. May the Almighty avert so fearful a calamity! Here, at Maintz and Frankfort, it will begin, if anything happens, as there are mixed garrisons; and we must side with one against the other! For Henry [1] who is still here, it is dreadful. He can't desert at such a moment, and yet if he should have to draw his sword against his country, his brothers fighting on the other side! Fancy the complications of such a war!

"For Vicky and Fritz (Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia) it is really dreadful; please let me hear by messenger what you hear from them. I am sure you think of us in these troubled times. What would dear Papa have said to all this? I long to hear from you, to

[1] Prince Henry of Hesse, second brother of Princess Alice's husband. He was in the Prussian service. As will be seen the fears of the princess and his family were fulfilled.

know that your warm heart is acting for Germany."

The queen, unspeakably distressed by the position of her two daughters, one on either contending side, made supreme efforts to keep the peace between Austria and Prussia. She offered to act as mediator, but Bismarck represented to the King of Prussia that she was inspired only by family reasons, and her advances were declined. It was Bismarck's dream to place Prussia at the head of Central Europe, and the first step in that direction was the crushing of Austria. Princess Alice clearly foresaw the result of the struggle to the small German states allied with Austria, the Bund or Confederation as they were styled. "We shall be beggars very soon, if it all goes on as it promises to do," she wrote to her mother. "It is a dreadful time. I anticipate it will be the close of the existence of the little countries. God stand by us! Without the Civil List Uncle Louis (the reigning Grand Duke of Hesse) and the family are beggars, as all the private property belongs to the country."

Until June the queen believed that the war would not take place. "How precious are your words of love and sympathy," Princess Alice wrote on the 8th of that month, "and the hope you still hold to, that war may somehow be

averted! It does me good to hear it; and I know how much, and how lovingly your thoughts dwell with dear Vicky and with me during this time of trial." But on the 15th the Prussians crossed the Hessian frontier, and at the queen's earnest entreaty the Princess Alice sent her children to England. "These lines," she wrote on June 18th, "I send by our children, whom you so kindly will take charge of. Alas! that the times should be such as to make this necessary! In your dear hands they will be so safe; and if we can give you a little pleasure in sending them, it would be a real consolation in parting from them, which we both feel very much." A week later the princess wrote begging her mother's help in the preparations she was making for the care of the wounded Hessians. "Collections are already being made for the hospitals in the field, and the necessary things to be got for the soldiers. Illness and wounds will be dreadful in this heat. Coarse linen and rags are the things of which one cannot have enough, and I am working, collecting shirts, sheets, etc., and I now come to ask, if you could send me some old linen for rags. In your numerous households it is collected twice a year and sent to hospitals. Could I beg you for some this time? It would be such a blessing for the poor Germans; and here they

are not so rich, and that is a thing of which in every war there has been too little. Lint I have ordered from England by wish of the doctors; and bandages also they wished for. If you could, through Dr. Jenner, procure me some of these things, I should be so grateful. . . . Four dozen shirts we are making in the house. Every contribution of linen, or of patterns of good cushions, or any good bed which in the English hospitals has been found useful, we should be delighted to have. . . . For the moment the people beg most for *rags*; our house being new, we have none. I am tolerably well, and cannot be too thankful for good nerves. Louis is very low at times, nervous at leaving me; and for him I keep up, though at times not without a struggle. May the Almighty watch over us, and not separate us, is my hourly prayer."

The queen followed the progress of the war with fearful interest. The victory of either side meant loss and disaster to those she loved. Prince Henry of Hesse's position was especially sad. "Whether Henry is engaged or not we do not know and can get no news of him," wrote Princess Alice. "At any rate he is cut off from news of us and the rest of Germany; and as our army is moving and he is on the extreme wing, at any moment he may find himself opposite his

own brothers and countrymen. It is most painful, and has been to my poor father-in-law a great shock, as we all hoped he had got away. Please let my brothers know this. They will feel for this unheard-of position for three brothers to be in."

The queen's anxiety for Princess Alice was further increased by the knowledge that she was about to become a mother. On July 12th the princess gave birth to her third daughter, Princess Irene,[1] and on the 21st the Prussian soldiers entered Darmstadt. "The confusion here is awful," she wrote to the queen, "the want of money alarming; right and left one must help. As the Prussians pillaged here, I have many people's things hidden in the house. Even while in bed I had to see gentlemen in my room, as there were things to be done and asked which had to come straight to me. Then our poor wounded —the wives and mothers begging I would inquire for their husbands and children. It is a state of things too dreadful to describe."

Among other things concealed in her palace by the princess were the standards of her husband's cavalry regiment, and other Hessian regiments, which she had placed under her bed.

[1] Now Princess Henry of Prussia and sister-in-law of the German emperor.

The battle of Sadowa, in which the Austrians were badly defeated, brought the war to an end, Prussia imposing the terms it pleased upon the beaten states. The kingdom of Hanover became a Prussian province together with the duchies of Schleswig-Holstein, and the territory exacted from Hesse and the other states. This was the first time in her life that war had actually touched the queen's family or affected their fortunes, and in the sweeping away of Hanover as a kingdom she was wounded in her family feeling and tradition. The queen was prouder of her Stuart than of her Guelph ancestry, but the Guelphs had held Hanover for over two hundred years, and the ending of the dynasty as kings affected her deeply. She wished to give her cousin, the dethroned king, an asylum in England, but when it was pointed out to her that his presence in the country might prove a cause of dissension with Prussia, she agreed to his living in Paris. She never lost an opportunity of showing him and his family every consideration, and when his daughter, Princess Frederica, whom she called "the poor lily of Hanover," made a morganatic marriage with Baron Pawel von Rammingen, a Hanoverian nobleman in her father's suite, the queen gave her an apartment in Hampton Court Palace.

These years saw momentous changes in Europe which the queen watched with foresight, not unmixed with alarm. It now became evident that the object of Bismarck's policy was to place the imperial crown upon the head of his sovereign, the King of Prussia, and although this aggrandizement of Prussia could not fail to please the queen's maternal feelings for the sake of her brilliant daughter, the Crown Princess, with the fate of Hanover and Schleswig-Holstein before her, she naturally dreaded that the Prussian chancellor's dream could only be fulfilled at the expense of another of her daughters and many of her closest kindred. After the conclusion of the War of 1866, the queen was not alone in fearing that Prussia would ultimately win her way to empire by crushing out the small German states, and for three years that fear existed both in Germany and England until Napoleon III gave Bismarck the means of attaining his ambition by foreign conquest, and the queen saw her eldest daughter a future empress and her German kinsmen confederates of the King of Prussia as German emperor, with no loss of territory or power within their own dominions.

CHAPTER XIV

PUBLIC FEELING AGAINST THE QUEEN

HE complete annihilation of the meretricious and glittering Third Empire by the Franco-Prussian War, and the establishment of the Third Republic in France sent a wave of republican sentiment through the Radical and ultra-Liberal forces in England, and once more there was a clamor against the queen's seclusion, and unjustifiable criticism was publicly made upon her income and expenditure, it being alleged that instead of spending the money allowed her by the country for the maintenance of the prestige of the crown, she was saving it, and that she had already amassed a vast private fortune. Sir Charles Dilke in a public speech declared that the queen paid no income tax, a statement that created a bad impression and of which the Radicals and anti-monarchists made the utmost capital. The queen, always confident of the love of the great

mass of her subjects, wished the actual facts to be placed before the country by her ministers, but they deemed such a statement inexpedient. As the exaggerations grew more and more gross, however, the queen insisted. She was so implicitly truthful herself, that she believed the truth should always be made known, especially when silence bred lies. It was therefore definitely stated in Parliament by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gladstone) that the queen did pay income tax; and when Sir Charles Dilke proposed a measure in the House of Commons for an inquiry into the queen's expenditure, so great was the indignation that, after a scene of wild disorder, only two other members voted for his proposal besides himself and his supporter, there being a majority of 274 against it.

In the meantime the queen had been ill and in great pain from neuralgia and rheumatic gout. Instantly the attacks in the newspapers ceased, and the queen, always ready to take the kindly view, believed that it was "remorse" for the "heartless, cruel way" in which they had been persecuting her. "The unjust attacks this year," wrote she, "the great worry and anxiety and hard work for ten years alone and unaided, with increasing age and never very strong health

have broken her down and almost driven her to despair," and she thought it was "very hard that it was necessary to have this severe illness and great suffering to make people feel for her and understand." "The sympathy," she said, "in dear Scotland has been great, and their press was the first to raise their voice in defence of a cruelly misunderstood woman. She will never forget it."

Scarcely had she herself recovered when the Prince of Wales was seized by the malady which had killed his father, ten years before, and during the eleven days when he lay between life and death, the queen, who had hurried to Sandringham, never left him and his wife. By a strange coincidence, the first signs that the fever was abating appeared on December 14th, the anniversary of the Prince Consort's death. Radicals, ultra-liberals, and republicans might attack her as much as they pleased; their diatribes and exaggerations might wound her feelings and depress her spirits, and their calumnies, based upon ignorance, might rouse her to a blaze of indignation, but beyond them lay the people, and with intuitive perception the queen knew she held the heart of the people. For the first time she addressed herself to her subjects directly, as she had done to her wounded soldiers in the

Crimea. There had been unmistakable signs of the nation's anxiety during the Prince of Wales's illness, and this was the queen's answer to her subjects:

"WINDSOR CASTLE, December 26, 1871.

"The Queen is very anxious to express her deep sense of the touching sympathy of the whole nation on the occasion of the alarming illness of her dear son, the Prince of Wales. The universal feeling shown by her people during those painful, terrible days and the sympathy evinced by them with herself and her beloved daughter the Princess of Wales, as well as the general joy in the improvement of the Prince of Wales's state, have made a deep and lasting impression upon her heart, which can never be effaced. It was, indeed, nothing new to her, for the Queen had met with the same sympathy when, ten years ago, a similar illness removed from her side the best, wisest, and kindest of husbands.

"The Queen wishes to express at the same time, on behalf of the Princess of Wales, her feelings of heartfelt gratitude, for she has been as deeply touched as the queen by the great and universal manifestations of loyalty and sympathy.

"The Queen cannot conclude without express-

ing her hope that her faithful subjects will continue their prayers to God for the complete recovery of her dear son to health and strength."

In the following February the queen emerged from her seclusion to accompany the Prince and Princess of Wales to St. Paul's Cathedral for a public service of thanksgiving for his recovery. Dressed in black velvet, bordered with ermine, she received a welcome that must have rewarded her for the years of misrepresentation she had suffered. And to that welcome of the thousands who had crowded the seven miles of streets through which she had driven, she replied once more directly to the people.

"BUCKINGHAM PALACE, February 29, 1872.

"The Queen is anxious, as on a previous occasion, to express publicly her *own* personal *very* deep sense of the reception she and her dear children met with on Tuesday, February 27th, from the millions of her subjects on her way to and from St. Paul's.

"Words are too weak for the Queen to say how very deeply touched and gratified she has been by the immense enthusiasm and affection exhibited toward her dear son and herself, from the highest down to the lowest, on the long

progress through the capital, and she would earnestly wish to convey her warmest and most heartfelt thanks to the whole nation for this great demonstration of loyalty.

"The Queen, as well as her son and dear daughter-in-law, felt that the whole nation joined with them in thanking God for sparing the beloved Prince of Wales's life.

"The remembrance of this day, and of the remarkable order maintained throughout will ever be affectionately remembered by the Queen and her family."

The passing of the years, the many events both domestic and political which crowded them, nothing could dim the queen's devotion to the memory of her husband; and it became the chief desire of her life that the English people should know him as she herself had known him. In 1862 she had caused a collection of his speeches and addresses to be prepared by Mr. (afterwards Sir Arthur) Helps, for publication, and had further directed General Grey, who had been the prince's private secretary, and now served her in the same capacity, to write an account of the Prince Consort's early life down to the time of his marriage for private circulation among her friends and relations. To one friend in

Mrs Baker
wrote from the
binder not better
we have the
Vols:—

Osborne.

Aug: 11. 1867.

Dearest Duchess,

I send you
today what
I had hoped to
have done long
ago, — the 2nd Vol.
of the Life of
Every beloved Hus-
band S. I know

you will value. —
There is one Copy
for yourself & one
I W. beg you to
give to the Duke of
Argyll. — & I was sorry
to hear that you
had been suffering
a good deal. I cannot
give a state a good
air to yourself, —
tho' within the
last week — I feel
fever free headache
but I need much
quiet & rest. —

I hope when I
return from dear
Scotland that I shall
have the pleasure
of seeing you —

Ever
yours
most affly
[illegible]

The delay in sending

sending a volume of the book, inscribed "From his heartbroken widow, Victoria," she wrote in 1867: "Dearest —— I send you to-day what I had hoped to have done long ago—the 2d vol. of the life of my beloved Husband which I know you will *value*. There is one copy for yourself and one I would beg you to give to ——. I was sorry to hear you had been suffering a good deal; I cannot give at all a good account of myself, though within the last week I feel free from headache, but I need much quiet and rest.

"I hope when I return from dear Scotland that I shall have the pleasure of seeing you.

"Ever yours most affectionately,

"V. R.

"The delay in sending these books arose from the binder not letting me have the vols."

So much was General Grey's book appreciated that the queen decided to place it before the general public. Its cordial reception determined her to have it continued, and to be a complete history of the prince's life, and "as *faithful* a representation as it possibly can be." The task was intrusted to Sir Theodore Martin, and was only ended in 1880 when the fifth and last vol-

ume appeared, the first having been published in 1874. All the material upon which the biographer worked was supplied by the queen, and she herself read and corrected every chapter as it was finished. The uncompromising frankness of the work startled a world hitherto accustomed to the private lives of sovereigns being shrouded in mystery, and there were even members of the queen's own family who were of opinion that many of the events discussed in the book had taken place too recently for the publication of private details concerning them. In January, 1873, Princess Alice had written from Darmstadt: "It is touching and fine in you to allow the world to have so much insight into your private life, and allow others to have what has only been *your* property and our inheritance.

"People can only be the better for reading about dear Papa, such as he was, and such as so feelingly and delicately Mr. Theodore Martin places before them. To me the volume is inexpressibly precious, and opens a field for thought in various senses."

But the princess had clearly expressed some doubt as to the wisdom of entering into private matters even at this lapse of time after her father's death, for the queen replied giving her

reasons for the full publication upon which she had insisted.

"OSBORNE, January 12, 1875.

"Dearest Alice. . . . Now as regards the book. If you will reflect a few minutes, you will see how I owed it to beloved Papa to let his noble character be known and understood, as it now is, and to wait longer, when those who knew him best—his own wife, and a few (very few there are) remaining friends—were all gone, or too old and too far removed from that time, to be able to present a really true picture of his most ideal and remarkable character, would have been really wrong.

"He must be known, for his own sake, for the good of England, and of his family, and of the world at large. Countless people write to say what good it does and will do. And it is already thirteen years since he left us!

"Then you must also remember, that endless false and untrue things have been written and said about us, public and private, and that in these days people will write and will know; therefore the only way to counteract this is to let the real, full truth be known, and as much be told as can be told with prudence and discretion, and then no harm, but good will be done. Nothing will help me more than that my people should

see what I have lost! Numbers of people we know have had their lives and memoirs published, and some beautiful ones: Bunsen's by his wife; Lord Elgin's by his (very touching and interesting); Lord Palmerston's, etc., etc.

"The *Early Years* volume was begun for private circulation only and then General Grey and many of Papa's friends and advisers begged me to have it published. This was done. The work was most popular, and greatly liked. General Grey could not go on with it, and asked me to ask Sir A. Helps to continue it, and he said he could not, but recommended Mr. Theodore Martin as one of the most eminent writers of the day, and hoped I could prevail on him to undertake this great national work. I did succeed, and he has taken seven years to prepare the whole, supplied by me with every letter and extract; and a deal of time it took, but I felt it would be a national, sacred work. You must, I think, see I am right now; Papa and I, too, would have suffered otherwise. I think even the German side of his character will be understood.

"One of the things that pleases people most is the beautiful way he took all good Stockmar's often very severe observations. And they also admire so much good old Stockmar's honesty and

fearlessness, and are pleased to be shown what a dear, warm-hearted old man he was.

"Your devoted Mamma,

"V. R."

The controlling factor of the queen's character was her instinct, and it was instinct that inspired this direct appeal to her people which had been further strengthened by the publication of her diary: "Leaves from a Journal of our Life in the Highlands from 1848 to 1861." Thus, all the joys and sorrows of her married life were placed before the nation both from her own point of view and from Prince Albert's. The Highland diary created an impression that the queen wished to share her pleasures and pains with her people; it had an immediate success, and enabled the world to draw a comparison between the happiness of the queen's married life and the desolation of her widowhood. Its simplicity and frankness disarmed the most critical, the daily entries bore the impress of being written under the influence of sincere feeling, and although Sir Arthur Helps, who assisted her in preparing the book for the press, used, the queen said, "to scold her for the colloquial inaccuracy of her style," it was the matter, not the manner which brought home to her

readers all that the queen had lost, and a vivid picture of her happy Highland life. Despite Sir Arthur's criticisms, the queen contended that the best vehicle for her diary was the actual words in which it had originally been written. She was frankly delighted by the popularity of the book, but was not, she wrote, "uplifted or puffed up by so much kindness, so much praise"; and as for her style of writing she said: "It was the simplicity of the style and the absence of all appearance of writing for effect which had given her book such immense and undeserved success. Besides, how could Mr. Helps expect pains to be taken when she wrote late at night, suffering from headache and exhaustion, and in dreadful haste and not for publication?"

The queen's excursions into literature now led her to take an interest in the writers who were making the third and fourth decades of her reign so brilliant. Tennyson, by reason of his "In Memoriam," had gained a high place in her esteem, and she entered into a correspondence with him which lasted until his death; he was frequently her visitor both at Osborne and Windsor. Dean Stanley, who had married her devoted friend and lady in waiting, Lady Augusta Bruce, arranged the famous meeting at the Deanery at Westminster between the queen and

Carlyle, which was the first sign the queen had ever given of her interest in literature that did not appeal to her personal predilections. It was a comprehensive party of the talents. Besides Carlyle, there were Browning, Sir Charles Lyell, the geologist, and Lady Lyell, Grote, the historian, and Mrs. Grote. The queen told Browning that she admired his wife's (Elizabeth Barrett Browning) poetry, and roused Carlyle to enthusiasm. He wrote that it was "impossible to imagine a politer little woman; nothing the least imperious; all gentle, all sincere . . . makes you feel, too (if you have any sense in you), that she is Queen." But Carlyle did not make a good impression on the queen; she thought him "gruff-tempered if not unmannerly."

No one disliked obsequiousness or any exaggeration of deference more than the queen, but no one more resented lack of deference or roughness of manner. She had a somewhat disconcerting expression to those presented to her for the first time, gazing straight into their eyes, coldly and critically. It was a habit she had adopted only after her widowhood. In the queen's position it was essential that everyone around her, from ministers downward, should be worthy of her confidence. During the prince's lifetime she had relied largely on his opinion,

it being their custom to discuss the impression made upon them both by the people presented to them. In the early days of her bereavement this was one of the queen's acutest trials: she knew she must rely entirely on her own opinion, especially with regard to any person connected with matters of state and politics, the rule of her girlhood not to discuss political or state affairs even with her most intimate friends, or her ladies and gentlemen, never having been broken. There was something infinitely pathetic in the queen's attitude when first called upon to exercise her judgment of character alone, her fine blue eyes looking eagerly into those of the person presented to her, as if they would gaze into the brain beyond and read its inmost thoughts; she dreaded making a mistake or gaining a wrong impression. With time, she became an expert judge of character, her curiously sensitive instinct coming to her aid, and the earlier expression of inquirer changed to one of suspended opinion, her eyes saying plainly that she was studying the face before her, neither kindly nor unkindly but as a queen, dispassionately, and without bias. If the impression made upon her mind was a good one, the eyes immediately answered the radiant smile which was the queen's greatest charm throughout her life; if the im-

pression was not a good one only those who were about her constantly could detect it. Her eyes and manner betrayed nothing, but there was a subtle sensation of guardedness, and a particular shade of politeness in her attitude which were eloquent to those who knew her well. Carlyle was deeply impressed, as we have seen, by the queen's politeness; if the keen, blue eyes had summed him up favorably he would have written of her cordiality and warmth.

The queen was not deeply interested in literature, although as a stateswoman she appreciated its influence on the people. She was not temperamentally inclined to subtleties of thought or imagination, and in all things, even in her reading, was attracted by simplicity and straightforwardness. Among the novelists of her reign Dickens was undoubtedly her favorite, and when the great author lent her some photographs of scenes in the American struggle between the North and South, she sent for him to thank him, saying that she had long wished to make his personal acquaintance. She received him with the greatest interest and courtesy and when he took his leave gave him a copy of "Leaves from a Journal of our Life in the Highlands" inscribed in her own hand, "From the humblest of writers to one of the greatest"; at the same time asking

him to give her autograph copies of his books. Five years before, when Thackeray's library was sold after his death, she had bought for the then large sum of £25 10*s*., the copy of "The Christmas Carol," which Dickens had presented to the author of "Vanity Fair." In later years Mr. Marion Crawford was her favorite writer of fiction, and once while she was staying at Cimiez she had hoped to meet him, but by some unfortunate accident the interview did not take place.

Three of the queen's children were married in the decade between 1870 and 1880; the first being the Princess Louise who married the Marquis of Lorne, now the Duke of Argyll, this being the first time since 1515 that an English sovereign had officially assented to the marriage of a princess with a non-royal subject, Mary the sister of Henry VIII, and the widow of a King of France marrying the Duke of Suffolk in that year with her brother's full consent. The Duke of Argyll himself writes that the queen returned "to an old custom, which had always obtained in Britain before the overthrow of the Stuart dynasty, of allowing a sovereign's daughter to marry in the country of her birth. This would probably never have been changed had it not been for the unfortunate alliances contracted in the Georgian era, which almost compelled the sover-

eign and Parliament to pass the law [1] which deprived all royal marriages of legality which were not expressly sanctioned by themselves. It is obvious that, where there may be a question of succession to the crown, the sovereign and Parliament must decide as to whether the marriage shall or shall not involve resignation of any right of possible succession. There had been some opposition in the House of Commons with regard to the marriage of each of the queen's children until, in this instance, it dwindled to the adverse vote of one man, and he was a personal friend of the bridegroom, and unfortunately blind!"

The marriage of the Duke of Edinburgh to the Grand Duchess Marie had a special significance, as it cemented the good relations between England and Russia. The ceremony took place according to both the Greek and the Protestant rites, with overwhelming magnificence at St. Petersburg, the queen choosing Dean Stanley to marry her son. Her letter to Lady Augusta Stanley is characteristic of the kindliness with which she conveyed her commands: "I shall see you to-morrow," she wrote, "and I wish to prepare you for what not only I but Alfred and others, including the Dean of Windsor and Lord

[1] The Royal Marriages Act.

Granville, are very anxious for—it is that I am very desirous that your Dean should perform the English ceremony at St. Petersburg, and that you should attend as one of my ladies. You travel so much, and dread cold so little, that, as in January the Russian climate is said to be healthy, I hope you will be able to undertake a mission which will require great discretion, and which will be a comfort to me. But you must fully consider whether you can manage it, and that is why I have thought it best to write before I see you both."

The dean and Lady Augusta, always ready to prove their devotion to the queen, went to St. Petersburg, the queen sending the following letter to the dean from Osborne:

"I address this letter to St. Petersburg with two parcels which require explanation, and which I trust to your special care. The one contains two sprigs of myrtle, which I ask you to put at once in a little warm water, and to keep till the afternoon of the 22d, to be placed in the middle of a bouquet of white flowers which I shall ask you to order and give from me to Marie before the English wedding, with this explanation, namely, that this myrtle comes from a large, healthy plant here, which has grown from a little bit of myrtle, much smaller than

these sprigs, which was in the Princess Royal's nosegay, and of which all the brides (the queen's daughters) have had a piece in succession.

"The second box contains two prayer books. The one in white, with an illumination of some verses which I had printed on purpose, is for the Grand Duchess, and the other, a plain one is for Alfred, both to be given to them on their wedding day, and for the English wedding. My dear mother gave my beloved husband and me prayer books which I now have and often use, especially the dear Prince's."

Two years later the queen lost her devoted friend Lady Augusta Stanley. When the fatal illness first declared itself she sent Princess Alice the news, which had been conveyed to her by Lady Frances Baillie, Lady Augusta's sister. "For your dear letter and for the enclosures I am so grateful," answered the princess, "but distressed beyond measure at dear Fanny's. I had a long letter from her some weeks back, when she was more hopeful about dear Augusta. This is too much sorrow for them all! Fanny I love as a sister, and dear Augusta's devotion and self-sacrifice to you, and even to us in those dreadful years, was something rare and beautiful. Her whole soul and heart were in the duty which to her was a sacred one. The good, excel-

lent Dean! My sympathy is so great with these three kind and good people so sorely tried. I grieve for you, too! God help them!"

In another letter the princess referred again in most touching terms to her mother's devoted friend. "No words can express how deep my sympathy and grief is for what our dear Augusta and the Dean have to go through. With her warm, large heart, which ever lived and suffered for others, how great must her pain be in having to leave him! I can positively think of nothing else lately, as you know my love for Augusta, the General, and Fanny has always been great; and when I think back of them in former times, and in the year 1861, my heart aches and my tears flow—feeling what you and we shall lose in dear Augusta. My pity for the good, kind Dean is so deep. I sent him a few words again to-day, in the hope he may still say a few words of love and gratitude to dear Augusta from me."

Death was indeed busy in the queen's most intimate circle. Stanch friends and wise counselors like Baron Stockmar and Lord Malmesbury were taken from her, but the heaviest blow since the death of the Prince Consort came in 1878, when Princess Alice died of diphtheria caught while devotedly nursing her husband and

children who were all ill at the same time with the complaint. Princess Alice occupied an especial place in the affections of the English people. She had been the comforter and helper of her mother in the first year after the Prince Consort's death, and her name conjured up a spectacle of a daughter's devotion and self-sacrifice with which it was ever associated in the minds of the people. To the queen she was especially dear because of her calm wisdom and her absorbing affection for her parents, especially for her father. Princess Christian in her memoir of Princess Alice says: "The happy daily intercourse with her parents; the many walks, drives, journeys with them and her brothers and sisters; the various occupations and amusements all watched over and shared in by the Queen and the Prince Consort, make up the sum of a most perfectly happy childhood and youth. Her adoration for her father became the one leading star through all her life; it influenced her every thought and action, and to the end of her short stay on earth she strove to act up to what he would have thought right. He was her highest ideal of all that was perfect, beautiful, and good, and even on her deathbed his loved name was the last she ever uttered."

When the news reached England that the grand ducal family of Hesse (Prince Louis had only succeeded to the grand duchy in 1877) were all down with diphtheria, there was public expression of relief at Princess Alice's escape, and admiration for the devoted care with which she was nursing her husband and children. The youngest child died, and so weak were the others that the news had to be kept from them that their favorite sister was dead. "Dear Ernie [1] having been preserved through the greatest danger is a source of such gratitude," Princess Alice wrote to the queen. "These have been terrible days! He sent a book to May this morning. It made me almost sick to smile at the dear boy. But he must be spared yet awhile what to him will be such a sorrow." But the strain of keeping so sad a secret was too much for the princess's strength, already greatly strained by days and nights of ceaseless nursing, and when she was attacked by the scourge at the moment when her husband and children had become convalescent, her condition at once became serious. The queen, alarmed by the reports, immediately sent her own doctor, Sir William Jenner, to Darmstadt, but he could do nothing, and after a week's illness the princess died

[1] The present Grand Duke of Hesse.

on the seventeenth anniversary of her father's death.

The outburst of sympathy to the queen was so widespread and so sincere that she addressed herself again directly to the nation on December 26th.

"The Queen is anxious to take the earliest opportunity of expressing publicly her heartfelt thanks for the universal and most touching sympathy shown to her by all classes of her loyal and faithful subjects on the present occasion when it has pleased God to call from this world her dearly beloved daughter, Princess Alice, Grand Duchess of Hesse.

"Overwhelmed with grief at the loss of a dear child, who was a bright example of loving tenderness, courageous devotion, and self-sacrifice to duty, it is most soothing to the Queen's feelings to see how entirely her grief is shared by her people. The Queen's deeply afflicted son-in-law, the Grand Duke of Hesse, is also anxious to make known his sincere gratitude for the kind feelings expressed toward himself and his dear children in their terrible bereavement, and his gratification at the appreciation shown by the people of England of the noble and endearing qualities of her whom all now mourn.

"Seventeen years ago at this very time, when a similar bereavement crushed the Queen's happiness, and this beloved and lamented daughter was her great comfort and support, the nation evinced the same touching sympathy, as well as when in December, 1871, the Prince of Wales was at the point of death.

"Such an exhibition of true and tender feeling will ever remain engraven on the Queen's heart, and is the more to be valued at this moment of great distress in the country, which no one more deeply deplores than the Queen herself."

The third marriage was that of the Duke of Connaught, the queen's third son, the year after the death of the Princess Alice, to the daughter of Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, the famous "Red Prince." This marriage formed another link between the English and Prussian royal families, the Red Prince being the nephew of the Emperor William and consequently first cousin of the Crown Prince Frederick.

The queen had always taken a keen interest in her great Indian dependency, and when Lord Beaconsfield, then Prime Minister, in 1875 suggested that the Prince of Wales should visit that country as her representative, she eagerly agreed. So successful was the six months' tour

and so unmistakable was the loyalty evinced by all the native princes, that on the prince's return Lord Beaconsfield thought it a matter of policy that India should be separately recognized in the queen's titles. For this purpose he introduced a bill into Parliament called "The Royal Titles Bill," which created her Empress of India. The Prime Minister assured the Liberal Opposition, which criticised his proposal very freely, that the title would be used only in India and in Indian affairs, but the queen "gloried in her new honor," and although at first she signed only Indian documents "Victoria R. and I." in two years' time she signed all documents and letters either "V. R. I." or "Victoria R. and I." ; and in 1893 the words In(diæ) Imp. (eratrix) were added to her titles on the coinage.

It was from no small motive that the queen rejoiced in her new title, no mere personal pleasure in being both queen and empress. She was profoundly convinced of the high destiny of the British Empire which she herself had seen grow and expand through all the continents, and she therefore welcomed every sign that associated her herself with the empire. The queen had imperial ambition, but not for herself or her family; they were solely for England.

As the years passed there came a more inti-

mate note in the queen's relations with her people, which is touchingly expressed in the letter she wrote to the nation after the death of her youngest son, the Duke of Albany, who had died suddenly at Cannes in March, 1884, two years after his marriage, leaving a daughter. His son [1] was born after the duke's death.

"WINDSOR CASTLE, April 11, 1884.

"I have on several previous occasions given personal expression to my deep sense of the loving sympathy and loyalty of my subjects in all parts of my Empire. I wish, therefore, in my present grievous bereavement, to thank them most warmly for the very gratifying manner in which they have shown not only their sympathy with me and my dear so deeply afflicted daughter-in-law, and my other children, but also their high appreciation of my beloved son's great qualities of head and heart, and of the loss he is to the country and to me. The affectionate sympathy of my loyal people, which has never

[1] Now Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. When Prince Albert's brother, the Duke Ernest, died without a son, the Duke of Edinburgh succeeded him, and when he, too, died without a male heir shortly before Queen Victoria's death, the Duke of Connaught renounced the succession, both for himself and his son, the young Duke of Albany therefore succeeding as next of kin to the Duke of Edinburgh.

failed me in weal or woe, is very soothing to my heart.

"Though much shaken and sorely afflicted by the many sorrows and trials which have fallen upon me during these past years, I will not lose courage, and, with the help of Him who has never forsaken me, will strive to labour on for the sake of my children, and for the good of the country I love so well, as long as I can."

And in a letter written at this time to Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, the son of her dear and devoted friend Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland, we find that simple and sincere religious conviction which had been the queen's support through her many sorrows and trials.

"WINDSOR CASTLE, July 10, 1884.

DEAR RONALD:

"Not knowing where you might be I did not at once answer your kind, feeling letter, which touched me much. Yes, God has taken most away who were my dearest, as well as those whom I most needed as helps and comforts, and I am sorely stricken indeed.

"This is but a pilgrimage, a great struggle, and not our real home, and we may say with those beautiful lines:

So long thy power has blessed me sure thou still
Wilt lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent till
The night be gone.
And with the morn those Angel faces smile
Which we have loved long since and lost awhile.

"I know you appreciated my dearest child—on your return I will send you one of his last photographs.

"Ever yours truly,
"V. R. I."

Again, when the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Clarence, died in 1892, on the eve of his marriage, the queen spoke heart to heart with the people.

"January 20, 1892.

"I must once again give expression to my deep sense of the loyalty and affectionate sympathy evinced by my subjects in every part of my Empire on an occasion more sad and tragical than any but one which has befallen me, and mine, as well as the nation. The overwhelming misfortune of my dearly loved grandson having thus been suddenly cut off in the flower of his age, full of promise for the future, amiable and gentle, and endearing himself to all, renders it hard for his sorely stricken parents, his dear

Windsor Castle.
July 10. 1884.

Dear Ronald,

Not knowing
where you might
be – I did not at
once answer your
kind, feeling letter
Wh. touched me
much. – Yes, God
has taken most
away who were
my dearest, as well.

as those whom I most needed as helps & comforts, & [illegible] I am sorely stricken indeed.

This is but a pilgrimage — a great struggle & not our real home & we may say with those beautiful lines:

"So long thy power has blest me sure thou still
Will lead me on —
O'er moor & fen, o'er craig & torrent, till
The Night be gone
And with the Morn those Angel faces smile
"Which we have loved long since & lost awhile"

—

I know you appreciate my darling child & on your return I will send you one of his last Photographs.

Ever
Yours
Truly
Ohd. —

young bride, and his fond grandmother to bow in submission to the inscrutable decrees of Providence.

"The sympathy of millions which has been so touchingly and vividly expressed, is deeply gratifying at such a time, and I wish, both in my own name and in that of my children, to express from my heart my warm gratitude to *all*.

"These testimonies of sympathy with us, and appreciation of my dear grandson, whom I loved as a son, and whose devotion to me was as great as that of a son, will be a help and consolation to me and mine in our affliction.

"My bereavements during the last thirty years of my reign have indeed been heavy. Though the labours, anxieties, and responsibilities inseparable from my position have been great, yet it is my earnest prayer that God may give me health and strength to work for the good and happiness of my dear country and Empire while life lasts.

"VICTORIA R. and I."

Four years later death again visited the queen's home circle, Prince Henry of Battenberg dying on his way back from Ashanti, where he had served with the British forces.

Throughout her life Princess Beatrice never left her mother, and when she married Prince Henry in 1885, he also lived with the queen, their children being her delight and solace in her declining years. The marriage had not been popular at the outset—Prince Henry and his brothers Prince Alexander (the Prince of Bulgaria) and Prince Louis, being the morganatic sons of Prince Charles of Hesse, the uncle of Princess Alice's husband—and it was felt that his position did not entitle him to marry a princess of Great Britain. Abroad, also, considerable feeling was aroused, especially at Berlin and St. Petersburg, the former court viewing the mating of a daughter of the queen with a non-royal prince with disfavor, and the latter scenting some political danger as the Prince of Bulgaria was openly opposed to Russian influence in the country which had chosen him for its ruler. But the queen had pursued her way undisturbed by the adverse opinions; she was greatly rewarded as her letter to the people on the prince's death shows unmistakably.

"February 14, 1896.

"I have, alas! once more to thank my loyal subjects for their warm sympathy in a fresh grievous affliction which has befallen me and

my beloved daughter, Princess Beatrice, Princess Henry of Battenberg.

"This new sorrow is overwhelming and to me is a double one, for I lose a dearly beloved and helpful son, whose presence was like a bright sunbeam in my home, and my dear daughter loses a noble, devoted husband to whom she was united by the closest affection.

"To witness the blighted happiness of the daughter who has never left me, and has comforted and helped me, is hard to bear. But the feeling of universal sympathy so touchingly shown by all classes of my subjects has deeply moved my child and myself, and has helped and soothed us greatly. I wish from my heart to thank my people for this, as well as for the appreciation manifested of the dear and gallant Prince who laid down his life in the service of his adopted country.

"My beloved child is an example to all in her courage, resignation, and submission to the will of God.

"VICTORIA R. and I."

The queen saw three of her children, Princess Alice, the Duke of Albany, and the Duke of Edinburgh, precede her to the grave, and two of her daughters widows, the Empress Fred-

erick, and Princess Beatrice, but the mourning paper upon which she wrote from the time of her husband's death, the black border of which in the early years was nearly an inch in depth, was primarily for him; and to the end of her life she wore the widow's cap and dressed in black, this only being relieved by white on the occasions when she appeared at public ceremonies. When she opened Parliament her crown was placed upon the widow's cap.

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA AND HER GRANDCHILDREN.

From a photograph taken in 1887.

CHAPTER XV

THE LAST YEARS OF THE REIGN

HE most striking personality among the queen's advisers in the middle period of her reign was Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield. In her political relations with him the queen was on precisely the same footing as with his great rival, Mr. Gladstone, but outside the sphere of politics she admitted him to her friendship. The queen never quite overcame a personal dislike of Mr. Gladstone, and at times there was considerable tension between them. Lord Beaconsfield probably gave the true reason of his personal success with her Majesty, and Gladstone's failure, when he said, "Gladstone treats the Queen like a public department; I treat her like a woman." The queen was not subtle-minded nor was she deeply read—her life was too busy for academic study—and Gladstone, with his unceasing torrent of eloquence and depth of intricate knowledge, bewildered

her; the queen arrived at her decisions by the stepping-stones of fact and the many years of experience in her high office; Gladstone arrived at his decisions by argument, which from the queen's point of view was both superfluous and waste of time, facts, she considered, admitting of no argument. Beaconsfield, on the other hand, if he did not agree with the queen, showed her clearly and succinctly his reason, therefore while she felt herself baffled by Mr. Gladstone without being able to exactly specify in what precise manner, with Lord Beaconsfield she "knew where she was." And whenever he was in office Beaconsfield, without in any way trenching upon the prerogative of the Prime Minister, made it his business to spare the queen many little annoyances and pin pricks. He was accused of seeking to increase the power of the sovereign, but this was merely the cry of ignorance. In weighty matters he followed the lines laid down by the Constitution, but some of his predecessors had made baseless objections at times to the granting of the queen's wishes in purely non-political and unimportant affairs—such as the bestowal of a title, or the granting of a Civil List pension—as if they feared the queen wished to step beyond her prescribed limits. Beaconsfield, on the other hand, accepted

such suggestions of the queen without question, and took especial pains that they should be immediately carried out. The queen could not fail to be pleased and touched by such consideration, and there sprang up a friendship between them which had its only parallel in the queen's friendship for Lord Melbourne—of all her prime ministers these two alone enjoyed the queen's personal friendship.

When Beaconsfield died in 1881 the queen sent two wreaths to his funeral, to one of which, of primroses, was attached a card in her own handwriting, "His favorite flower. A tribute of affection from Queen Victoria." Until that time the public were in ignorance of the statesman's love for the simple primrose, the popular imagination connecting him rather with more exotic plants, but it was immediately seized upon by the Conservative party as a political emblem; a vast association was formed under the name of the Primrose League, with the flower as its badge, and on April 19th, the anniversary of Beaconsfield's death, every year it is the custom for Conservatives of all ranks to wear primroses. It was the queen who by her never-failing remembrance of her friends' likes and dislikes thus associated forever the name of her friend and counselor with the little spring flower.

To Dean Stanley she wrote of his death: "His devotion and kindness to me, his wise counsels, his great gentleness combined with firmness, his one thought of the honour and glory of the country, and his unswerving loyalty to the throne make the death of my dear Lord Beaconsfield a national calamity. My grief is real and lasting." And to Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, who had sent her a replica of a statuette he had made of the late statesman, she answered in the same spirit.

"WINDSOR CASTLE, May 2, 1881.

"MY DEAR RONALD:

"Accept my very best thanks for the statuette of my dear, valued and devoted friend and counsellor Lord Beaconsfield, whose loss is so great to the country and to me! It is very pleasing, and every recollection of him whom I know you admired and valued is a satisfaction to me.

"Ever yours affectionately,

"V. R. I."

Nor was the queen content with private expression of her grief. Above the seat which Lord Beaconsfield had always occupied in the chancel of the church at Hughenden, she placed a memorial such as no English sovereign had

ever before raised to a minister or a subject. Below a portrait of the statesman, in low relief, ran this inscription, which the queen had written herself: "To the dear and honoured memory of Benjamin, Earl of Beaconsfield, this memorial is placed by his grateful and affectionate sovereign and friend Victoria R. I. ('Kings love him that speaketh right,' Proverbs xvi, 13), February 27, 1882."

Although the queen never stepped beyond the limits laid down for her by the Constitution, she made no secret of her displeasure when her advice was disregarded by her ministers, as in the case of General Gordon. In 1884 the Soudan, under the Mahdi, had risen against the Egyptian rule, and the English Government was obliged to decide whether the revolt should be crushed out, or whether the Soudan should be left at the mercy of the Mahdi, and be separated from Egypt. The latter decision was arrived at, and the queen, although unassenting, was obliged to acquiesce. There were, however, some garrisons of Egyptian soldiers under command of British officers still left in the disaffected territory in situations of grave danger, and these it was decided should be rescued. In vain the queen urged instant measures, but the Liberal Government, under Mr. Gladstone, pre-

ferred the methods of diplomacy and to this end dispatched General Gordon, who had great influence with the natives, to Khartoum, there to negotiate with the fanatical Mahdi for the relief of the unfortunate garrisons.

The queen at once expressed her belief that he could not perform such a task alone and without adequate military support. Within a very brief space of time came the news that Gordon was being besieged in Khartoum by the Mahdi and his hordes, and in the most solemn manner possible her Majesty warned the Government that it was its duty to send an expedition to relieve him. But the Government, dreading further entanglement in Egypt, temporized. In vain the queen repeated her warnings, but it was not until it became clear that the whole country sided in her opinion that an army was sent to Khartoum in the autumn of 1884. The queen's fears were verified. Khartoum had fallen and General Gordon had been killed before the English army arrived there in January, 1885.

It is said "no disaster of her reign caused the Queen more pain and indignation," and that "she found it difficult to describe the poignancy of her grief at the remembrance that her urgent counsels had not been followed." In a letter to

General Gordon's sister she expressed those feelings openly:

"OSBORNE, February 17, 1885.

"DEAR MISS GORDON:

"How shall I write to you or how shall I attempt to express *what I feel?* To *think* of your dear, noble, heroic brother, who served his country and his Queen so truly, so heroically, with a self-sacrifice so edifying to the world, is to me *grief inexpressible.* Indeed it has made me ill!

"My heart bleeds for you, his sister, who have gone through so many anxieties on his account, and who loved the dear brother as he deserved to be. You are all so good and trustful to have such strong faith that you will be sustained even now, when *real* absolute evidence of your dear brother's death does not exist, but I fear there cannot be much doubt of it.

"Some day I hope to see you again, to tell you all I cannot express.

"My daughter Beatrice, who has felt quite as I do, wishes me to express her deepest sympathy with you. I have so many expressions of sorrow and sympathy from abroad—from my eldest daughter, the Crown Princess, and from my cousin, the King of the Belgians—the very warmest.

"Would you express to your other sisters and your elder brother my true sympathy, and what I do so keenly feel—the *stain* left upon England for your dear brother's cruel, though heroic fate?

"Ever, dear Miss Gordon,
"Yours sincerely and sympathizingly,
"V. R. I."

In the following month when Miss Gordon received her brother's possessions, which were found by the relieving force at Khartoum, she sent his Bible and the diary he had kept during the siege, to the queen. "It is most kind and good of you," the queen wrote to her on March 16, 1885, "to give me this precious Bible, and I only hope that you are not depriving yourself and family of such a treasure, if you have no other? May I ask you during how many years your heroic brother had it with him? I shall have a case made for it with an inscription, and place it in the library here (Windsor) with your letter and the touching extract from his last to you.

"I have ordered, as you know, a marble bust of your dear brother to be placed in the corridor here, where so many busts and pictures of our greatest generals and statesmen are, and hope

that you will see it before it is finished to give your opinion as to the likeness.

"Believe me, always yours very sincerely,

"VICTORIA R. I."

As the fiftieth year of her reign approached the queen took a more active part in public ceremonies, not because her mourning for the Prince Consort was lessened, but from a stern sense of duty. She realized that the ceremonial part of her functions as sovereign could not be wholly delegated to others, and for the remaining sixteen years of her life, despite the advance of age and the increase of infirmities, she made every effort, often at great physical and mental cost to herself, to sustain the prestige of the throne in this direction. She opened exhibitions and philanthropic institutions in all parts of the kingdom. So enthusiastically was she received that she nerved herself to fresh efforts, and the people who had so frequently murmured against her seclusion were now both touched by her coming once more among them, and grateful to her for resuming duties from which her age might well have excused her.

Time once more in the queen's career brought its revenge.

The Jubilee Year of 1887 was one of unceas-

ing hard work for the queen, but if her labors were heavy her reward was great, and on that June 21st, as she drove in all the magnificence and panoply of state for the first time since her husband's death, to the thanksgiving service at Westminster Abbey, her eyes and her ears showed her beyond all question the position she occupied in her people's heart. She had dreaded this public procession, the arrangement of its details had brought before her very keenly the many gaps the years had made in her family circle, but although the queen never forgot her sorrows she had a natural buoyancy of temperament which enabled her to take comfort in the present. Thirty-two princes, her sons and grandsons and sons-in-law preceded her carriage on horseback, a brilliant and magnificent cortège; there was a glittering cavalcade of Indian princes, there was no colony of her vast empire, no matter how small or how remote but had sent its representative to render her homage and express its loyalty, and Europe had sent its greatest princes to honor her. Poignant as were the recollections called to her mind by the ceremony in the abbey where she had been crowned fifty years before, the queen's message to the people shows that she, too, had felt the current of understanding and sympathy which swayed

the vast crowds through which she passed—a subtle current not to be described in words, but which passed from people to sovereign and from sovereign to people more surely even than the shouting and the cheering.

"WINDSOR CASTLE, June 24th.

"I am anxious to express to my people my warm thanks for the kind and more than kind reception I met with on going to and returning from Westminster Abbey, with all my children and grandchildren.

"The enthusiastic reception I met with then, as well as on those eventful days in London, as well as in Windsor on the occasion of my Jubilee, has touched me deeply. It has shown that all the labours and anxieties of fifty long years, twenty-two of which I spent in unclouded happiness, shared and cheered by my beloved husband, while an equal number were full of sorrows and trials borne without his sheltering arm and wise help, have been appreciated by my people.

"This feeling, and the sense of duty toward my dear country and subjects who are so inseparably bound up in my life, will encourage me in my task, often a very difficult and arduous one, during the remainder of my life.

"The wonderful order preserved on this occa-

sion and the good behaviour of the enormous multitudes assembled merits my highest admiration.

"That God may protect and abundantly bless my country is my fervent prayer.

"VICTORIA R. and I."

From the year of the first Jubilee the court lost some of its gloom. The queen had always loved the theater, and during her married life had been its constant patron when in London, but after the Prince Consort's death she never entered a play-house again. She now began, however, to have performances of amateur theatricals at Windsor or Osborne or Balmoral, in which some of her daughters and her ladies and gentlemen took part, and later this was extended to performances given by the leading London actors and their companies who journeyed down to Windsor, and even to Scotland for the purpose of playing before the queen.

Occasionally an opera would be given by the members of the Covent Garden Company. Although the queen kept abreast of all modern movements in politics and affairs of state, in her private life, in her tastes and pursuits she clung to the traditions of her early womanhood. Thus she preferred the Italian operas of her youth to

all others, and frankly expressed her dislike of many of the modern composers whom she could not understand. Sullivan and Gounod delighted her; the setting of the Lord's Prayer, in the "Faust" of the latter composer, she ordered to be played at her funeral service.

In an article which appeared in the *Quarterly Review* in April, 1901, three months after the queen's death, there was a story which was widely quoted as showing the queen's impatience with music that did not please her. The story ran that a piece by Rubinstein was being played to her. The queen asked what it was, and being told that it was a "drinking song," said sharply: "Why you could not drink a cup of tea to that." The queen did actually use the words quoted but not in the spirit suggested by the story. What happened was this. A lady in waiting was playing Rubinstein's Mélodie in F. The queen had forgotten the title of the piece, and turning to another of her ladies asked what it was. The lady did not know but hazarded, "I think it is a drinking song." The queen was much amused by the mistake and said, "Oh, no, not a drinking song! You could not drink a cup of tea to that."

This instance is perhaps trifling, but it shows that even the quotation of actual words can convey a wrong impression.

No one was more conscious of this danger than the queen herself, and for that reason she strongly disliked any of her ladies and gentlemen keeping notes of conversations, or incidents that happened at court. She knew that her wish that her private life should be considered by those about her as the private life of an ordinary gentlewoman, would be faithfully respected, but she feared the false deductions and exaggerations that might be drawn from diaries and notes perhaps when she and the writers were all dead. The twisting of her amusement at the mistake over the title of Rubinstein's Mélodie into actual ignorance, shows how justified the queen was in her wish as to notes and diaries, and it says much for the personal devotion she excited in the large number of men and women who were in her personal service throughout her long reign, that she never had reason to complain of gossip or indiscretion arising from anything said or written by those around her. The queen possessed the faculty of exciting personal devotion in a remarkable degree—this again like the devotion of her subjects was the outcome of her own kind heart and deep sympathy. Her interest once kindled never died, but was extended to the children, and even grandchildren of her friends. She rejoiced in their happiness and shared their

sorrows. The following letter, written to Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower after the death of his sister Constance, Duchess of Westminster (both children of her beloved friend Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland who died in 1867), is one of countless instances of the queen's affection and remembrance for the children of those she had honored with her friendship.

"OSBORNE, December 26, 1880.

"DEAR RONALD:

"Your sad and interesting letter reached me this morning. Many thanks for it. I feel so much for you. I know what dear Constance's loss must be to you. For poor dear Caroline [1] to be the last sister is most sad and must I fear make her anxious.

"I hear you are gone with her to Ireland and I therefore send this letter there. What a dreadful state that unhappy country is in. It must be a terrible anxiety to Caroline, and she must be so alarmed about the Duke and her sons.

"I don't quite understand the wish to be buried in a churchyard,[2] but I *know some* vaults *are* gloomy and painful, and it is distressing to

[1] Duchess of Leinster, daughter of Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland.

[2] The Duchess of Westminster had expressed a wish to be buried in a churchyard and not in the family vault.

be unable to mark the *exact spot.* My dear sister [1] had the same feeling as Constance.

"That beautiful hymn, 'Thy Will be Done,' was my dearest Alice's favourite one, and was sung at the funeral service we had at Windsor on the day she was laid to rest in a foreign land. And do you know that the 23d. was the day on which my darling husband was taken to his rest. It was the anniversary, I think, also of poor Albert's death.[2]

"Your dearest mother was so loving and kind to me at that dreadful time, now sixteen years ago.

"May God support you! I hope to see you when you come back from Ireland.

"Ever yours affectionately,

"V. R. I."

Kindness of thought and sympathy were the salient traits of the queen's character, and there were very few people whom she received who were not instantly struck by this side of her personality. In 1859 Prince Hohenlohe, afterwards German Chancellor, wrote, after a dinner at Buckingham Palace: "The Queen talked to the

[1] The queen's half-sister, Princess Féodore of Leiningen; married the Prince of Hohenlohe-Langenburg in 1828 and died in 1872.

[2] Lord Albert Leveson-Sutherland-Gower, brother of the Duchess of Westminster.

company. She spoke in a very sympathetic, unaffected, and natural way to me (quite unlike the apathetic chatter of continental sovereigns), and inquired after all my family, showing her kindness of heart, of which I had heard so much." Her sympathy, too, always went out to her ministers and servants if they were unjustly treated, and what she felt she said frankly, and with no circumlocution. Her words of understanding and encouragement on many occasions nerved her high officers of state to face public clamor and misrepresentations, as no personal feeling of rectitude and wisdom could have done. They knew that if the queen judged them to be in the right they had her whole-hearted support. One instance, one of a countless number, may be cited. Lord Lytton was Viceroy of India in 1880. The attacks made upon his administration in England were so bitter that he complained to the queen, who immediately replied: "She is much grieved but not surprised to see by it how much grieved and pained he is at the virulent and unjust way in which he has been attacked, but she hopes he will set it down to the (in her opinion unpardonable) heat and passion of party, which, alas! seems to blind people, and certainly has exceeded on the Liberal side all limits."

Although the queen was deeply imbued by a sense of her position and was convinced that she occupied the throne by the divine will, after her marriage she ceased to care for the outward trappings of that position. She loved conversation, and all the pleasures of domestic society, but "society" so-called she detested even in the flush of her married happiness. In 1852 her uncle, King Leopold, had written to her expressing his fears of the effect upon both herself and Prince Albert of the gayeties of the London season, and in reply she had written: "Allow me to say just one word about the London season. The London season consists for us of two State balls and two concerts. We are hardly ever later than twelve o'clock at night, and our only dissipation is going three or four times a week to the play or opera, which is a great amusement and *délassement* to us both. As to going out as people do here every night to balls and parties, and to breakfasts and teas all day long besides, I am sure no one would stand it worse than I should. So you see, dearest uncle, that in fact the London season is nothing to us. The person who really is terribly fagged during the season with business and seeing people so constantly is Albert. This often makes me anxious and unhappy." During her widowhood this

aversion deepened, and the effort she made to bring herself more closely into touch with "society" during the ten years that elapsed between her two Jubilees may therefore be gauged. It was purely in response to what she felt was her duty to her people, and happily the effect reacted on the queen's private life. During the last fourteen years of her reign she regained something of her old spirits; her cheerfulness had never wholly deserted her, but the unceasing responsibility of her widowhood, and the constant misrepresentation of her motives had dimmed it. Now, however, the many manifestations of the affection and respect of the people brought her a measure of happiness which in some degree compensated for her many sorrows and trials. National pride and personal affection for the sovereign brought about the enthusiasm of the Jubilee of 1887; passionate devotion to the queen was the keynote of the Diamond Jubilee of 1897, when the aged monarch, the tears streaming from her eyes, drove through miles of the London streets, including the poorer quarters on the south side of the Thames. Millions of people thronged the long route taken by the procession. The queen passed amidst an indescribable emotion; the moment was the apotheosis of her reign. She had toiled and suffered for her people, and

now she received her full and just reward. Before leaving Buckingham Palace for the procession, the queen, profoundly moved by the national outburst of loyalty, had telegraphed a message that ran like wildfire through the waiting crowds. "From my heart I thank my beloved people. May God bless them." A fortnight later she penned one of the most touching of her messages.

"WINDSOR CASTLE, July 15, 1897.

"I have frequently expressed my personal feelings to my people, and though on this memorable occasion there have been many official expressions of my deep sense of the unbounded loyalty evinced, I cannot rest satisfied without personally giving utterance to these sentiments.

"It is difficult for me on this occasion to say how truly touched and grateful I am for the spontaneous and universal outburst of loyal attachment and real affection which I have experienced on the completion of the sixtieth year of my reign.

"During my progress through London on June 22d, this great enthusiasm was shown in the most striking manner, and can never be effaced from my heart.

"It is indeed deeply gratifying, after so many

QUEEN VICTORIA, 1899.

years of labour and anxiety for the good of my beloved country to find that my exertions have been appreciated throughout my vast Empire.

"In weal and woe I have ever had the true sympathy of all my people, which has been warmly reciprocated by myself.

"It has given me unbounded pleasure to see so many of my subjects from all parts of the world assembled here, and to find them joining in the acclamations of loyal devotion to myself, and I would wish to thank them all from the depth of my grateful heart.

"I shall ever pray to God to bless them, and enable me still to discharge my duties for their welfare as long as life lasts.

"VICTORIA R. and I."

Those duties the queen discharged until within a few days of her death four years later.

Sorrow and distress filled the last two years of the queen's life. It had been her earnest prayer that England would never again be plunged into war, but when the inevitable happened in 1899, despite her failing eyesight, she took the same attitude that she had taken in former struggles —the war in South Africa was to be prosecuted with all vigor and dispatch. And when disaster followed disaster in the early days of the strug-

gle she would allow no one about her to utter the fears that ran throughout the country. " All will come right," she stoutly declared. Her courage notwithstanding, the war, with its heavy toll of deaths, preyed upon her mind. She thought and talked of it incessantly; she made woolen caps and comforters for the soldiers with her own hands, and expressed her annoyance with characteristic frankness when she discovered that they had been given to officers and not to private soldiers as she intended; and as a Christmas present to the army she sent one hundred thousand boxes of chocolate to be distributed as a personal gift from herself to each soldier at the front.

In the spring of 1900, when success attended the British arms, she went to London " to be near her people," and drove through the streets two afternoons in succession, receiving overwhelming ovations of enthusiasm and tenderness. The queen was nearly eighty-one; the trip she had taken to the Riviera each spring for many years had been most beneficial to her health, but anxious to show her appreciation of the loyalty of Ireland, from which country so many of the soldiers in South Africa had been drawn, she determined to abandon her rest in the south and visit Dublin instead. Forty years had passed

since her last visit to Ireland; the attitude of the Irish people had displeased her, she considered them disloyal, and throughout the major portion of her reign had declined to visit their country, or to take any personal steps by which their loyalty might be quickened. Now, she spared no effort to show her appreciation of their help in the war, and she stayed in Dublin for nearly three weeks.

During the summer she visited the wounded soldiers at Netley Hospital, besides giving a series of Court entertainments at Windsor and Buckingham Palace; then the Court was plunged in mourning. Her son, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg (Duke of Edinburgh), died with tragic suddenness in July at the Rosenau, the country palace near Coburg, where the queen and Prince Albert had spent so many happy hours during their first visit to her mother and husband's old home. His only son had died the previous year. In October, Prince Christian Victor, the eldest son of Princess Christian, died of enteric fever in South Africa, where he was serving with the army, and shortly before this the queen learned that her eldest daughter, the Empress Frederick, was suffering from a malady which could only have a fatal end. It was thought by those about her that the abandonment of the visit to the

Riviera had had a bad effect upon the queen's health, and it was also clear that the anxiety of the war and the burden of private sorrows were telling upon her strength. A certain alarm was felt, especially as her memory, which had always been remarkably clear and accurate, began to fail her, but the public knew nothing. In December the queen attended a sale of needlework by Irish ladies at the Windsor Town Hall, making many purchases, one of which, a screen embroidered with violets, she sent as a Christmas present to the Empress Eugénie.

On December 14th, the anniversary of the Prince Consort's death was celebrated at the Frogmore Mausoleum, with the service that had marked the day for thirty-nine years and from which the queen had never been absent. On the 18th, the queen went to Osborne. It was the last journey she was destined to take. On Christmas Day she received a distressing shock in the death of her friend, Lady Churchill, who was found dead in bed. Lady Churchill had been a lifelong friend of the queen, and her loss, so suddenly, added to the burden of sorrows under which her health was rapidly failing. After Christmas the change in the queen was very marked, but no danger was feared, and the usual arrangements were made for the spring holiday on the

Riviera. Although the queen was beginning to lose her firm grasp upon affairs and her alert perception, when she received Lord Roberts on his return from South Africa on January 2d, and Mr. Chamberlain, then the Colonial Minister, on the 11th, neither of them perceived any sign of the mental weariness which was alarming her physicians. On the 14th, she received Lord Roberts a second time and both at this interview and at the first her anxiety as to the progress of the war had been painful in its intensity. Her sight was dim, her memory was failing, she was too weak to stand, Death had already laid his hand upon her, but her passionate love for her people, her obedience to duty rose supreme over her physical infirmity. After an hour's talk, however, with Lord Roberts, she collapsed, but the next day she was able to drive out with her widowed daughter-in-law, the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg. When she returned she was so exhausted that she had to be lifted from the carriage.

Four days later it was announced to the people that the queen was suffering from physical prostration, but they could not realize that actual danger existed. England and the queen, the queen and England, had grown to be synonymous terms, and it was only as the bulletins grew

more and more grave that the possibility of her death began to be understood. Even on the morning of the day of her passing the newspapers expressed the general feeling that her wonderful vitality would reassert itself, and when the news was flashed in the evening from Osborne that the great queen had slipped away from life without pain or consciousness, it seemed as if the unbelievable had happened.

The queen had reigned longer than any of her predecessors on the English throne, she had reigned longer than any monarch in Europe with the exception of Louis XIV of France. And these two reigns afforded a curious contrast. The reign of Louis XIV, *le Roi Soleil*, the Sun-god, had opened in a blaze of glory, but when he died the golden sun which had been his emblem had become tarnished and decayed, and he was huddled to his grave amidst the execrations and gibes of an exhausted and downtrodden people.

Queen Victoria's reign had opened in hope rather than in glory. She had come as a breath of spring in a family whose vulgar vices and Teutonic sympathies had shaken the prestige of the English throne so severely that the country was on the verge of revolution. By the example of her private life she had not only raised the

throne from the mud of scandal and dishonor with which it had been covered by George IV, and some of his brothers, but she had set an ideal of family life before the English people, an ideal to which it had long been unaccustomed. As her reign progressed the sun of her people's love rose higher and higher, and when she died the people did not mourn her as a sovereign but as a friend, a protector, and as the embodiment of all that was best and highest in the race. It was no sycophancy, no mere desire to do like others, that plunged the whole of England into mourning; the spirit of reverence and sorrow, and the impulse to show that sorrow which even led the very poor [1] to the pawn shop in order that they might have the wherewithal to buy crape, came straight from the heart of the nation.

The Jubilee and the Diamond Jubilee had expressed the world-wide power, the glory and the honor of the queen's reign, but when the tiny coffin, surmounted by a diamond crown, was

[1] In the East End of London, where a large proportion of the population live from hand to mouth, many instances came under the personal notice of the writer of poor women actually pawning saucepans, odds and ends of rickety furniture, etc., in order to be able to trim their bonnets with black. Nor was this the case in the East End alone, but in many other cities, and in the less poor classes actual sacrifices were made in order to buy a black dress.

drawn upon the gun carriage through the purple-hung streets of London on its way to Windsor, the dense crowds of silent people clad in deepest mourning thought nothing of honor, or power, or glory. The queen was dead, and for a space the life of England stood still.

For over sixty years the queen had been the emblem of patriotism. There had been misunderstandings; in earlier years she had been misjudged, but by her own frankness she had cleared away those errors, and her people knew her for what she was. This knowledge had permeated through every rank, and the writer remembers that on the occasion of a colliery explosion in the north of England the first words uttered by one of the colliers when he heard of the accident were: "Won't the owd Queen be sorry to hear this."

It has been urged against the queen that by her many years of seclusion she seriously lessened the prestige and influence of the throne. Nor can the truth of this charge be wholly denied, so far as the years that elapsed between the death of the Prince Consort and the first Jubilee are concerned. All nations under monarchical rule are apt to estimate the value of the throne from its spectacular effect, but of the unceasing labor which devolves upon the occupant of a

throne they are entirely ignorant. The English people for years imagined that the queen, buried in the seclusion of Balmoral or Osborne, had given herself up to an unavailing sorrow. We know that overwhelming as was that sorrow, those years of seclusion were spent in work which many a strong and capable man would have hesitated to undertake. The queen's ceaseless vigilance and interest in public affairs had a widespread influence, and the ultimate outcome was to place the throne upon a basis of love and loyalty such as no pomp of sovereignty, or pageantry of spectacle, could ever have given it. As Professor Lecky says: "The sex of Queen Victoria no doubt gave an additional touch of warmth to the loyalty of her people, and many of the qualities that made her most popular are intensely, if not distinctively, feminine, they would not, however, have given her the place she will always hold in English history if they had not been united with what men are accustomed to regard as more peculiarly masculine —a clear, well-balanced mind, singularly free from fanaticisms and exaggerations, excellently fitted to estimate rightly the true proportion of things."

Devotion to duty, a keen realization of the responsibility her position placed upon her, an

intense affection for her people and her family, filled the queen's life and thoughts. She was the greatest moral force in England in the nineteenth century, by her example as a worker, a woman, a wife, and a mother. And the words that Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Cranmer at the christening of Queen Elizabeth in *Henry VIII* might more fittingly have been spoken at that painful christening scene on June 24, 1819, at Kensington Palace, when the greatest of the English queens was regarded as an interloper and a block of stumbling to family ambition:

> She shall be, to the happiness of England, an aged princess,
> Many days shall see her, and not a day
> Without a deed to crown it.

APPENDIX

QUEEN VICTORIA'S GRANDCHILDREN

At the time of the Queen's accession the English royal family was connected only with the smaller reigning houses of Germany. To-day, it is closely related to the majority of the ruling houses of Europe. Six of her grandchildren are European sovereigns—the Empress of Russia, the Queen of Spain, the Queen of Norway, the German Emperor, the Grand Duke of Hesse, and the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha; while five of her grandchildren are married to the heirs-apparent to thrones and principalities —the Crown Princess of Sweden, the Duchess of Sparta (Crown Princess of Greece), the Crown Princess of Roumania, the Hereditary Princess of Saxe-Meiningen, and the Hereditary Princess of Hohenlohe-Langenburg.

The Queen had forty grandchildren, of whom thirty-one survived her. The following table shows their position and alliances:

The Children of the Princess Royal (Crown Princess of Prussia and Empress Frederick):

Emperor William II, German Emperor and King of Prussia.

Prince Henry, married Princess Irene, daughter of Princess Alice.

Princess Charlotte, married the Hereditary Prince of Saxe-Meiningen.

Princess Frederika Victoria, married Prince Adolph of Schaumburg-Lippe.

Princess Sophie Dorothea, married the Duke of Sparta (Crown Prince of Greece).

Princess Margaretta Beatrice, married Prince Frederick Charles of Hesse-Cassel.

THE CHILDREN OF THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES (NOW KING EDWARD VII, AND QUEEN ALEXANDRA):

The Duke of Clarence (died 1892).

The Duke of York (now Prince of Wales), married Princess Mary of Teck, daughter of the Queen's first cousin, the Duchess of Teck, née Princess Mary of Cambridge.

Princess Louise (now Princess Royal), married the Duke of Fife.

Princess Maud (now Queen of Norway), married her cousin, Prince Charles of Denmark, chosen for their King by the Norwegians.

Princess Victoria (unmarried).

THE CHILDREN OF THE PRINCESS ALICE, GRAND DUCHESS OF HESSE:

The present Grand Duke of Hesse, married his cousin, Princess Victoria Melita of Saxe-Coburg.

Princess Victoria, married Prince Louis of Battenberg.
Princess Elizabeth, married the Grand Duke Serge of Russia.
Princess Irene, married her cousin, Prince Henry of Prussia.
Princess Alix Victoria, married the Emperor Nicholas II of Russia.

THE CHILDREN OF THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH (DUKE AND DUCHESS OF SAXE-COBURG AND GOTHA):

Prince Alfred (died 1899).
Princess Marie, married the Crown Prince of Roumania.
Princess Victoria Melita,[1] married her cousin the Grand Duke of Hesse.
Princess Alexandra, married the Hereditary Prince of Hohenlohe-Langenburg.
Princess Beatrice (unmarried).

THE CHILDREN OF PRINCE AND PRINCESS CHRISTIAN OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN (PRINCESS HELENA):

Prince Christian Victor (died during the Boer War).
Prince Albert Victor, an officer in the German Army (unmarried).

[1] This marriage was dissolved in 1901 by the sovereign law of the Grand Duchy of Hesse, and the Princess has since married her cousin on the mother's side, the Grand Duke Cyril of Russia. The Grand Duke of Hesse has also remarried, his present wife being a princess of one of the smaller German ruling houses.

Princess Louise Augusta, married Prince Aribert of Anhalt. (This marriage was dissolved by the husband's father, the Prince of Anhalt, who has sovereign rights within his own principality.)

Princess Victoria (unmarried).

THE CHILDREN OF THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF CONNAUGHT:

Prince Arthur (unmarried).

Princess Margaret, married the Duke of Scania, now Crown Prince of Sweden.

Princess Patricia (unmarried).

THE CHILDREN OF THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF ALBANY:

The present Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (succeeded his uncle, the Duke of Edinburgh, when the Duke of Connaught renounced the succession to the duchy for himself and his son).

Princess Alice, married Prince Alexander of Teck, (brother of the Princess of Wales).

THE CHILDREN OF PRINCESS BEATRICE, PRINCESS HENRY OF BATTENBERG:

Prince Alexander (unmarried).

Prince Leopold (unmarried).

Prince Maurice (unmarried).

Princess Victoria Eugenie, married the King of Spain.

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